



Oregon
Agritourism
Partnership



Dear Board of Agriculture:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Oregon Agritourism Partnership (OAP), and Oregon Farm Loops. OAP is an all-volunteer* not-for-profit, and currently has 68 farm loop partners within the mid-Willamette Valley, who are primarily small family farms that produce products and experiences to sell directly to the public. Our board of directors are primarily farm producers, with representation from the Gorge, Eastern and Southern Oregon as well as the Willamette Valley. We currently promote four farm loops.

This letter is specific to Resolution 310. While point number 5 in the draft resolution has merit, Covid restrictions are already in place on group gathering sizes statewide. We do not support any new restrictions on farms selling products or services directly to the public, for the following reasons:

1. Family farms here in the Willamette Valley have been struggling throughout bad and good economic times to generate income required to save their farm. I don't know of a family farm where there isn't a family member who helps support the farm through a profession outside of farming. Family farms deserve a level playing field to be able to sell their products and services to any consumer on site and enjoy the same privileges as farms who produce and sell alcoholic products.
2. Please do not base your decision on the number of individual farm letters you receive. Our farms have the 1-2 economic gut punch of Covid and wildfires. I could not in good conscience ask our farmers to take a break to simply write a letter to you at this time. Many of them are in Level 2 and 3 recovery mode - saving crops and harvest, rescuing livestock and farm equipment.
3. Adding new restrictions to on-farm sales activities will ultimately force more farms to sell off their lands to the out-of-state factory farmers. Many of these non-owner-occupied farms have demonstrated that they are bottom-line production driven, with little regard for the residual quality of the land they farm or the health and wellbeing of the surrounding small communities. Family farmers for generations are the consummate stewards of their land. They possess the knowhow and foresight to utilize sustainable practices and tools to maintain a healthy ecosystem. A Willamette valley devoid of family farms will strip away both the above and below ground ecosystem air and water quality, including the ultimate quality of life that Oregonians have worked so hard to preserve.
4. Since the adoption of Senate Bill 1010, Oregonians who don't live on farms have educated and acclimated themselves to the value of farm direct products. They strive to provide their families with quality nutritious fresh food, as well as garden starts and nursery plants. They also enjoy the adventure and enlightenment of shopping at the source. Oregonians have grown to appreciate organic practices, authentic stories, and expertise directly from growers vs. well-intended but inexperienced customer service at big box stores. Oregonians will not easily give up this quest.
5. Oregon consumers have become effective environmental watchdogs and will question land practices that may or may not be in compliance with current regulatory measures. Any action taken to restrict their ability to observe what's going on down on the farm could trigger negative public perception. This could quite possibly lead them to believe that it is the factory farm interests that are carrying the weight to restrict their access to rural Oregon.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Dan Hoynacki, Acting Executive Director

*Contracted business services

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