

Submitter: Katherine Wolff

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Semiconductors

Measure: SB4

I have been a member of Stoneboat CSA for many years. Year-round, every week or two, I have the opportunity to drive out to the farm to pick up my delicious veggies (along with fruit, mushrooms, bread, noodles, beer and more - all brought in by local producers each week in the summer, making the farm pick up into a farmer's market supporting many small businesses). Crossing the urban growth boundary into the farmland is a wondrous experience. The land is so verdant, so productive, and so beautiful - and so accessible to those living in the metro area. This bill could change all that and I urge you to oppose this bill. As our farmer Aaron said:

I was very happy to go back in person to the Small Farms Conference put on by OSU this year and see the hundreds of folks who grow veggies for direct market. The attendance was capped at 800 people and that meant that at least that many Oregon farmers didn't go as did! And we're leaders in this national trend - the leading national magazine for our industry "Growing for Market" has about half its contributors writing from Oregon right now. And it's a good business too - at my farm we are able to employ six or so people year round and add another four in the summers - everyone gets a good, meaningful job with a livable wage. And we contribute to the local economy - we'll make around \$600,000 off our 14 or so tillable acres and virtually all of that goes back to other local vendors and circulates again in Oregon.

Here, as in much of the country, we represent a growing sector of the economy; I know that from experience. Every year I have multiple people on my crew planning to start their own farm in the area and a number of former employees have. For almost all of them the barrier isn't skill or even capital but the poor access to land that slows the growth and health of our industry.

But I think talking just about the economic impact isn't a good measure for small farms or farms in general. Growing the food here gives Oregonians a lot of control over the food in their communities and, like Oregonians often do, we can stretch those locally grown resources to benefit our state and take care of more people. Here is a good article outlining how farmers markets help in food deserts (<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9215/html>) and I can attest that about 5% of my sales are to folks using a SNAP card or WIC checks every year. Of course, Oregon taxpayers, and you all in the legislature, have done their parts and we have Double Up Food Bucks to stretch the federal benefits twice as far and encourage folks to eat fresh, local food.

I also want to tell you a story about our farm in COVID 19 and during the supply chain issues we had then and for the next two years. About two weeks after COVID shutdowns started and food was becoming scarce, folks started turning to local farms. While some huge farms in Florida and California were dumping tons of produce, we pivoted our entire production, banded together with other farms, and bought as many extra seeds as we could (those were in short supply too) and we were able to feed three times the number of CSA members as we had the previous year. We also provided veggie boxes (free if you needed, pay if you could) during the worst months of the pandemic and supplied two very busy farmers' markets all year when supermarket veggies were scarce. Besides the critical source of food in a scary time, we were able to provide community and reassurance to a lot of folks. The 350 or so families in our CSA that year got updates letting them know we were able to farm safely and distribute their food safely - they'd have veggies all year (and fruit, and meat, and fish, and bread, and many other things that many of them added on that year from our other local partners).

I don't think we've seen the last of supply chain issues, I'm not even sure we've seen the last of pandemics, and I worry that climate change will cause similar disruptions.