



Locally Grown
and
GROWING STRONG

**House Committee on Housing
OFB Testimony in Support of HB 2096**

January 26, 2021

Chair Fahey and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2096. By way of background, the Oregon Farm Bureau is the state's largest agricultural trade association representing nearly 7,000 farm and ranch families in the state, many of which provide housing to their employees as a voluntary benefit or a part of the federal H-2A program.

Providing safe, reliable, and affordable housing to agricultural employees is of vital importance to many agricultural producers who depend on attracting a highly skilled workforce. Unfortunately, building and maintaining housing is incredibly expensive, and many producers are unable to absorb the costs. To make matters worse, OR-OSHA's COVID-19 mitigation requirements and devastating wildfires have drastically reduced the availability of housing for Oregon's agricultural workers. A robust, healthy, safe, and housed workforce is critical to the success of Oregon agriculture and securing our state's food supply. Now more than ever, we must incentivize and support the creation of housing opportunities for agricultural workers.

For these reasons, we support maximizing agricultural workforce housing tax credits and making the credits more flexible so they can be better utilized by housing providers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 2096. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Samantha Bayer
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