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## Comments to the Oregon Board of Agriculture

Director Taylor, Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Friends of Family Farmers represents Oregon family farmers who responsibly steward their land and feed our communities. We promote policies that protect and expand the ability of family farmers and ranchers to operate successful land-based enterprises while providing safe and nutritious food for all Oregonians. Today, we will highlight our positions on a few issues currently before the Board of Agriculture and the Oregon Legislature.

- 1. Agritourism** - Before addressing current legislation, we'd like to note our concern over the draft agritourism policy that the Board is considering, Resolution 310. We, like the Oregon Farmers Market Association, are a part of the statewide Oregon Agritourism Work Group, a group of stakeholders working to create clarity in statute and administrative rule related to agritourism across Oregon. We are concerned that the draft resolution does not address a number of issues that farmers who wish to incorporate agritourism into their businesses are facing today, and that more work needs to be done to fully recognize the value and benefits that agritourism can bring. As such, we urge the Board NOT to adopt the agritourism resolution in its current form in order to allow more time for members of the Oregon Agritourism Work Group and other relevant organizations, agencies and businesses to provide additional feedback and input.
- 2. HB 4109/Chlorpyrifos Phaseout** - We are supporting HB 4109 to phase out the toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos, which is harmful to human health and the environment. We believe responsible stewardship of the land and protection of farmworkers and our communities requires moving towards far less toxic alternatives. This WWII era warfare chemical has been linked to low birth weight, reduced IQ and attention disorders in children, as well as other health problems for those exposed to it. It was about to be restricted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) until a very recent abrupt reversal. HB 4109 would immediately end aerial spraying of chlorpyrifos as well as applying the pesticide within 300 feet of schools, and phase out all uses beginning in 2022. If passed, Oregon would be the fourth state to restrict this pesticide in the face of federal inaction. Recently, even the primary manufacturer of chlorpyrifos announced it is discontinuing its production. While we hope this decision will lead to reduced use of this harmful chemical over time, it is possible generic versions will continue to be used. Oregon needs to take action now to begin the phaseout process and help farmers find safer alternatives.
- 3. SB 1513/CAFO Permitting changes - SB 1562/Umatilla Basin task force** - The disastrous failure of the Lost Valley mega-dairy near Boardman revealed significant inadequacies in Oregon's permitting and oversight of large Concentrated Feeding Operations (CAFOs). Since that time, we have called for a 'time-out' on permitting new or expanding large-scale industrial CAFOs so that the state can enact new policies that protect the viability of small and mid-sized farms, water, public health and the environment

from the threats that mega-CAFOs pose. Unfortunately, **Oregon has not yet enacted a single reform in the wake of the Lost Valley debate.**

Instead of enacting real solutions, the Legislature is considering two bills that will effectively do nothing to prevent the harmful impacts of new and expanding mega-CAFOs on family-scale farmers, water quality and quantity, air quality and the climate. As a result, we are opposing both SB 1513 and SB 1562.

SB 1513 makes a small number of 'window dressing' type changes to the permitting process for new large CAFOs with over 2500 dairy cows, 3500 beef cattle and other very large operations with different animal types. The bill speaks to some of the worst agency failures observed during the Lost Valley permitting process, but will do nothing to prevent the harmful impacts as more of these mega-scale operations move to Oregon. It is frankly shocking that ODA and DEQ would need a new law to require the changes outlined in SB 1513, for example, to ensure a facility is fully built before animals are allowed on site, or to direct ODA and DEQ to consult with the Oregon Water Resources Department to determine if enough water is available for a new large CAFO to operate. SB 1513 falls far short of the meaningful solutions Oregon needs as more and more mega-CAFOs move to our state to take advantage of our lax rules, and we continue to call for a time-out on issuing new mega-CAFO permits until stronger rules are adopted.

Similarly, SB 1562 proposes yet another 'task force' instead of real solutions. This one would study the decades-long issue of dangerous nitrate pollution in groundwater in the Lower Umatilla Basin, where a number of existing mega-CAFOs exist and more are proposed. The task force proposed by SB 1562 will be stacked with stakeholders that have so far not provided any meaningful solutions to chronic groundwater nitrate contamination since the Lower Umatilla Groundwater Management Area was first designated for nitrate pollution in 1990, *30 years ago*. Oregon's history of creating task forces has become a way to legitimize inaction, much like 2008's Dairy Air Quality Task Force, in which consensus recommendations for a program to reduce harmful air emissions from large dairies were never acted on. We cannot support SB 1562 because it offers no meaningful solutions at a time ODA and DEQ are considering issuing permits for major new sources of groundwater nitrate pollution like the Easterday mega-CAFO at the site of Lost Valley.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

Shari Sirkin  
Executive Director