



470 Lancaster Drive NE | Salem, OR 97301 | www.tilth.org | PH 503.378.0690 | FX 503.378.0809 | organic@tilth.org

Land Conservation and Development Commission
635 Capitol Street NE, Suite 150
Salem, OR 97301

January 22, 2008

Dear Commissioners:

Oregon Tilth Inc. is a non-profit organization that supports and promotes biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture through education, research, advocacy and product certification. Our membership represents all facets of the food system, including farmers, food processors & handlers, retailers and many consumers. Since its inception, Oregon Tilth has emphasized the value of a reciprocal relationship between urban and rural communities.

Oregon Tilth is accredited by the United States Department of Agriculture to offer organic certification services. Organic agriculture is growing extensively throughout Oregon. In 2000, Oregon Tilth certified 214 farms and 16,800 acres in Oregon. By the end of 2006, we certified 310 farms and 47,600 acres in Oregon. In 2005, organic farms in Oregon reported \$36.3 million in organic sales. Organic agriculture provides farms seeking to maintain economic viability with an important marketing niche.

Currently, Oregon Tilth certifies 40 farms and nearly 700 acres in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. Most of these farms are smaller scale operations (less than 25 acres) and rely on urban-based direct marketing channels such as farmers markets, sales to locally-owned natural food stores & co-ops, and restaurant accounts. Accordingly, these farms contribute significantly to the food culture and community for which the Portland metro region has deservedly received national attention and recognition.

Farms that reside close to urban centers are consistently at-risk from non-agricultural development interests. Yet, the state of Oregon has a long history of land-use planning that works to protect open spaces and natural resources which Oregonians value and consider part of our heritage. Accordingly, Oregon Tilth advocates for land-use planning that recognizes the positive contributions of farms and farmland to a region's culture and community. We strongly encourage the LCDC to implement SB 1011 in a manner that will ensure the long-term protection and viability of prime farmland as part of the urban growth planning process. In particular, Oregon Tilth supports protection of land defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as "Foundation" and "Important" via the designation of such areas as rural reserves.

We are hopeful that SB 1011 will protect our legacy as a state that has placed a high value on our land use, our natural resources and our food. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Schreiner
Quality Control Director
Oregon Tilth, Inc.