



Oregon Agritourism Partnership

February 12, 2020

RE: Resolution 310

Oregon Board of Agriculture
Chair Boyer 635 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Boyer, Vice-Chair Hallock, and members of the board,

The Oregon Agritourism Partnership (OAP) was founded in 2014 by farmers to advocate for farmers who are involved in farm direct sales and other interactions that bring the visiting public on to farmland. This non-profit was established to assist producers with state-wide opportunities that:

Connect the public with Oregon farms, ranches, wineries, other agriculture value-added operations and the people who operate them, and agricultural events in order to build relationships and enhance knowledge, familiarity, and appreciation for farming, and to establish a sense of place.

Provide the public with easier access to sources of fresh, wholesome foods as well as local sources of plants, fiber, and farm animals;

Connect the public with the land and its resources;

Provide fun and educational experiences that will encourage families to get outdoors and enjoy spending time together.

Through the ensuing years we have worked to meet the needs these family farm operations, some were established, and some were just beginning.

To further peer to peer communications between farmers who interact with the general public to sell their products or farm experience. This has been accomplished through Agritourism Summits that are open to all interested farmers and ranchers.

To help advocate at the legislature for limited liability from injury when farms, ranches and on-farm value-added operations invite the general public to their operation. Now, an Agritourism Limited Liability Sign when posted at the entrance to a farm helps to protect operators that choose to invite the public onto their farms. There have also been tours for legislators to farms.

To establish the Oregon Farm Loop program that is inclusive of all types of ag production that wishes to engage the public. We currently have four loops: Canby, Farmlandia, Molalla Country, and Marion. There are currently 68 farmer members of these farm loops and there are plans to expand the farm loop program to other areas of Oregon.

A positive benefit has been the authentic educational experiences and opportunities that agritourism has been able to share with the general public. Agritourism has become an integral part of sharing positive information with the public and this benefits all agricultural operations.

Resolution 310 that is before you has not been vetted with the OAP board or its agricultural members, whom will be impacted. The OAP Board of Directors would encourage you, the Board of Agriculture, to allow additional time for more opportunity to comment on this resolution. We strongly encourage the Board of Agriculture to pause adoption of this resolution until a future board meeting. The issue of whether and how agritourism events should be sited on farmland was first addressed by the legislature in SB 960 in 2011. Since that time, we have seen the agritourism industry grow and thrive in Oregon, and we've had many members who have had agritourism become an integral part of their operations. The OAP understands that there need to be limitations in place that will protect compatibility with existing neighboring farm operations. We do not want to see non-agricultural activities on EFU ground. We want to be good neighbors and stewards of the land that do not impact the current or future operations of other farm operations, while yet being able to seek the educational and financial opportunities that vertical integration and direct sales to the public can provide.

The potential impact from Resolution 310 to our member operations could be very significant and detrimental to their family farm operations. The issues deserve more input from these stakeholders. We encourage you to pause on this resolution until more inclusive discussions can happen.

Regards,

John Zielinski

President – Oregon Agritourism Partnership