

## **Solutions to a Changing Climate: Oregon's Farmers and Ranchers**

Oregon is stepping up to take responsibility for climate pollution. Farmers and ranchers are an important part of the solution—from our coastal dairy operators to eastern wheat farmers, from Hood River’s Fruit Loop orchards to nurseries and diverse vegetable farms throughout the state. These farms and ranches can implement management practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon stored in the soil—providing a clear pathway for Oregon’s vision of clean air, clean water, and a future resilient to climate change.

Climate-friendly agricultural practices may include soil building practices like reduced tillage, cover cropping and composting, or hedgerow and riparian plantings, as well as pasture and range management. Many of these practices provide enhancements like increased soil health, including better fertility and improved water retention, while others create pollinator and wildlife habitat. In addition, projects that support irrigation modernization, alternative manure management and localized renewable energy on farms are an important part of the climate change solution.

### **The Basics of Oregon’s Proposed Cap and Invest Bill**

In 2020, our state legislators will once again consider a bill to curb Oregon’s climate pollution. The Cap and Invest policy proposal on the table is the result of a decade of work by the State in collaboration with public and private partners. The policy puts a limit and price on climate pollution from the largest emitters in the state. These include utilities, transportation fuels and large manufacturing. Agriculture is not directly regulated by the program.

Revenue generated by putting a price on pollution will be directed to agriculture in several ways: voluntary incentive programs for agriculture, investments in impacted rural communities and rebates for community members, the development of a new carbon offset market, and additional research money for universities and nonprofits to better understand agricultural solutions to climate change.

### **Voluntary Incentives for Oregon Agriculture**

As the bill was written last year, at least 20% of the revenue generated for climate investments is designated to natural and working lands, including farms and forests. In turn, a grant program will be set up to distribute those funds to incentivize climate-friendly agricultural practices. These practices include reduced tillage, cover cropping and composting, hedgerow and riparian plantings, alternative manure management, as well as pasture and range management. Funds will also help maximize energy and water efficiency with support for irrigation modernization projects. The input of interested farmers, ranchers, and trade associations will be critical as the program is developed so that it can maximize its benefits across the state.

### **Agriculture is Part of the Solution**

A Cap and Invest policy in Oregon provides an important opportunity to highlight the role our valued farm and ranching communities can play as part of the solution to climate change. We are just beginning to understand how farm practices can lead to reduced emissions and increased carbon stored in the soils. We also recognize that the reality of some ag operations today includes using propane to heat greenhouses and diesel to run farm equipment. Within the proposed Cap and Invest policy there are programs to assist with improving energy efficiency of current technology and transitioning to more efficient, less polluting alternatives.

For more information or to get involved contact:

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