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Re: SB 530 Support

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources:

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) offers its enthusiastic support for SB 530. EMO is made up of 15 member denominations and over 150 congregations, faith-based organizations, and institutions across Oregon. We also partner with many individuals and groups from a variety of faith traditions in our climate and environmental work through Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL), which also expresses support for SB 530.

Faith communities in rural and coastal parts of the state have members who would benefit from the provisions in this bill, such as farmers, ranchers, forest owners, and those whose homes are threatened by wildfires, floods, and sea level rise. Last year, a farmer from Hood River joined a virtual meeting with his federal legislator from his tractor to advocate with us for the funds in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) that would go toward regenerative agriculture and other practices that will help Oregon's natural and working lands contribute positively toward greenhouse gas reductions and carbon dioxide sequestration. These IRA funds can now be accessed, provided Oregon shows we are prepared to make use of them. This Hood River farmer is not alone; many Oregonians would like to live in ways that care for our common land, water, and air, but need some help in the form of the training and funding to make that transition, facilitated through SB 530.

The important work documented in the Oregon Global Warming Commission in its 2021 Natural and Working Lands proposal outlines a viable conceptual framework that is now poised to become state law. We encourage your committee to advance this bill so it can become one of our state's most effective tools to address climate change while simultaneously providing other important benefits, such as healthier soil and mitigated risk of wildfire and flooding.

According to the Oregon Global Warming Commission, natural climate solutions can help Oregon sequester at least an additional 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMT_{CO2e}) per year in Oregon's natural and working lands and waters by 2030, and at least 9.5 MMT_{CO2e} per year by 2050. At the same time, they can offer valuable benefits for forest owners, farmers, ranchers, and communities throughout our state. The very practices that sequester and store carbon can also help our lands and waters become more resilient to

climate-fueled drought, wildfires, storm-surges, and extreme temperatures, improve water quality, protect habitat for fish and wildlife, enhance net earnings for landowners, and help families put food on the table.

SB 530 will provide dedicated funding for voluntary natural climate solution projects. It will also place Oregon in a good position to compete for and leverage new federal funds provided by the Inflation Reduction Act as well as private investments.

We are pleased to see that many enlightened owners of farms, ranches, and forests, elected officials, and a wide range of organizations have gone on record in support of SB 530. The Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is pleased to be a member of this broad coalition of supporters.

Respectfully,

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