



OREGON COAST ALLIANCE

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House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use
Oregon Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2573, Removing Cranberries from High Value Crop Definition
Via Email: haglu.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

HB 2573 would remove cranberries as a designated crop for High-Value Farmland. Oregon Coast Alliance opposes this bill. A great percentage of Oregon's cranberries grow in bogs on the south coast, in Coos and Curry Counties. They are an important part of the rural economy in both counties.

There are two principal objections to this bill:

- (a) Removing cranberries from designation as a crop grown on High-Value Farmland will open those lands to more non-farm uses. Any non-farm uses available on Exclusive Farm Use zoned lands will become permissible (as a conditional use), including dwellings and golf courses. Since removing cranberries from high-value designation would be permanent, the danger of increased non-farm uses on some of the richest farm soils in the state would only increase over time. This is not the way to protect farmland and sustain an agricultural rural economy. Furthermore, perennial crops like cranberries require a substantial, long-term investment by the farmer. State policy should provide the land use protection necessary to support that investment.
- (b) Farm policy should not be changed piecemeal because of a temporary or occasional issue. That is imprudent and shortsighted. If there is a problem with High-Value Farmland designations in general, or

in a class of crops, the situation needs to be looked at and studied comprehensively – not piece by piece as a perceived, occasional need floats to the surface. Removing cranberries from the high-value designation opens the door to doing the same for crops such as hazelnuts, orchards and wine grapes, which together affect tens of thousands of acres in Oregon.

Oregon Coast Alliance urges the Committee to oppose this bill removing cranberries from High-Value Farmland designation. It is bad policy for the cranberry industry, and shortsighted policy with many repercussions for all other perennial crops, and the rich farm soils that support them.

Thank you,

/s/ Cameron La Follette

Cameron La Follette
Executive Director