

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF CLACKAMAS COUNTY, STATE OF OREGON**

In the Matter of Recognizing the
Economic Impacts of Historical
Weather Events on Clackamas
County's Agricultural Sector



Resolution No. _____
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WHEREAS, Clackamas County has experienced the compounding effects of fire, ice, and heat leading to systemic crop failure and the potential for economic disaster for thousands of Clackamas County farmers; and

WHEREAS, the State of Oregon is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country. The state's fertile soil, temperate climate and protected farmland allow for a robust agriculture, food, and fiber industry producing over 220 commodities and specialty crops; and

WHEREAS, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon's agriculture directly and indirectly contributes 686,518 jobs, \$29.71 billion in wages, \$12.12 billion in taxes, and \$2.85 billion in exports to the state's overall economy; and

WHEREAS, Oregon is a leading producer in the nation of a variety of specialty commodity crops including hazelnuts, grass and clover seed, Christmas trees, blueberries, blackcap raspberries, sugar beet seed and rhubarb. Its agriculture, livestock, fisheries and specialty products such as bees, honey, lavender, dahlias and mint all contribute to the economic vitality of the State of Oregon and Clackamas County; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Oregon's agricultural production, upwards to 80%, is exported both domestically and internationally, making agriculture an important traded-sector commodity. The majority of volume exported through the Port of Portland is made up of Oregon raised agricultural products making agriculture a significant economic engine to both urban and rural Oregon communities; and

WHEREAS, in September 2020 a rash of wildfires throughout the State and within Clackamas County resulted in destruction of our forest resources, evacuations, and destruction of homes and other property. Hundreds of thousands of acres of Christmas trees and timber were destroyed. The smoke disrupted bee colonies and the tons of forest fire ash generated by these wildfires fell thickly throughout the region and adversely impacted grapes, hazelnuts, berries, and other fall crops on the verge of harvesting; and

WHEREAS, in February 2021, Clackamas County in particular was significantly impacted by an unprecedented winter ice storm that resulted in power outages for over 100,000 residents. Thick layers of ice laced buildings, power lines, trees, plants and vegetation throughout Clackamas County. Fruit trees, hazelnut orchards, and nursery stock across Clackamas County and the Willamette Valley lost limbs and collapsed under the weight of the heavy ice; and

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WHEREAS, in June 2021, a record-shattering heat wave spread across the State of Oregon. The unprecedented heat dome resulted in some of the highest temperatures ever recorded in the area. Three days of unrelenting heat with temperatures between 108 and 116 degrees scorched blueberries, grapes, blackberries, strawberries, and blackcap raspberries still in the field, fried acres of the prized Christmas trees, damaged developing hazelnuts, and further exacerbated an already existing drought situation; and

WHEREAS, the economic impacts of these events upon Oregon growers were immediate. The long-term damage to these crops and the economic vitality of the industry will not be known for years. These impacts are further intensified because the losses to the annual crops and to the damaged trees may be unmitigated or undercompensated due to a lack of insurance; and

WHEREAS, recently Governor Brown met with the Secretary of U.S. Department of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to discuss the Biden-Harris administration's response to the serious drought and wildfire conditions in Oregon and saw firsthand the impacts of heat and drought stress on the agriculture sector. The meeting underscored the importance of a strong state and federal partnership in helping Oregon's agriculture sector respond to the stresses of increasing climate-related weather events.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS that:

1. Clackamas County recognizes the vital importance that agriculture and its associated sectors play in the economic vitality of the State of Oregon and commits to pursuing resources in the form of emergency relief for economic losses resulting from extreme weather and natural disasters;
2. Clackamas County reaffirms its support for its Performance Clackamas goal of adopting a Climate Action Plan and will pursue funding to address climate change at the local level to allow counties to invest in long-term climate resilience of agricultural lands and businesses;
3. Clackamas County reaffirms its support for its Performance Clackamas goal of increasing food production and food production acres and is committed to safeguarding agricultural and forest lands from non-farm uses, and preventing low density development and sprawl which decreases the economic viability of agricultural lands and increases the risks and costs of wildfire containment

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DATED this ___ day of ___ 2021.

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair

Recording Secretary