

Mr. Chairman, while H.R. 4766, the fiscal year 2005 Agriculture Appropriations bill, is far from perfect, I vote in support of this bill that contains key programs for Oregon and important amendments that made this a better bill.

I am pleased that my amendment to designate \$1.2 million of the funds within the Office of Inspector General to be used to enforce animal fighting laws passed, reflecting Congress' continuing attention to the inhumane, cruel, and economically devastating problem of animal fighting. I was also pleased to see the passage of Representative *Hooley's* amendment that increases funding for programs to eradicate Sudden Oak Death, a serious plant disease that threatens a nursery industry responsible for \$700 million of annual production in Oregon and \$14 billion nationally.

I am disappointed to see the failure of an amendment offered by Ranking Member *Kaptur* that would increase funding for Farmers Markets. I would hope the committee can work to improve funding for these programs that connect local farmers with their communities. I am also deeply dissatisfied in the funding levels for conservation programs that were a key component to the passage of the 2002 farm bill. Continual funding cuts to these programs have shown that these commitments were, in actuality, empty promises. I will continue to work to strengthen funding for these programs that help farmers, and improve the environment and our communities.