



February 15, 2021

Senator Christine Rolfes
303 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40423
Olympia, WA 98504

Rep. Timm Ormsby
JLOB 315
PO Box 40600
Olympia WA 98504-0600

Re: Soil Health Initiative –2021-2023 Biennial Operating Budget

Dear Senator Rolfes and Rep. Ormsby:

PCC Community Markets strongly supported the passage of the Soil Health Initiative during the 2020 state legislative session. We are writing to respectfully request that this important initiative receive its full allocation of funding for the 2021-2023 biennial operating budget.

As the nation's largest co-op grocery retailer with 15 stores and more than \$300 million in revenue, PCC Community Markets has dedicated our triple bottom line business to providing local, organic and sustainable food to Washington state residents. Our shoppers care about the environment and how their food is grown, raised, and harvested.

Because climate change is front of mind for both consumers and producers in Washington, efforts must be made on multiple fronts to move our food production system forward and reduce its negative climate impacts. This requires not only supporting research and best practices concerning the health of the soil and agriculture's ecosystem impacts, but also concerning the nutritious value of the food produced.

The Soil Health Initiative takes a science-based and producer-supportive approach to addressing these consumer and producer concerns. More importantly, the Soil Health Initiative framework will move Washington forward in developing state-based research and best practices to support food system resiliency, which will become increasingly necessary under regional climate change pressures.

Unfortunately, the most critical component of funding for the Soil Health Initiative—those allocated to support Washington State University (WSU)'s research—was vetoed to address the COVID-19 emergency. While WSU was able to find a temporary source of funding to carry forward its work, it is essential that the requested \$2,076,000 be provided for the 2021-2023 period.



PCC continues to support this collaborative and science-based approach to improving science and support for our food production system and encourage you to prioritize the full Soil Health Initiative budgetary request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted respectfully,

Aimee Simpson
Director of Advocacy & Product Sustainability

cc: Sen. Marko Lias
Rep. Sharon Shewmake