



Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Ron Wesen, First District

Peter Browning, Second District

Lisa Janicki, Third District

February 28, 2023

Sara K. Young
Executive Director
Port of Skagit
15400 Airport Drive
Burlington, WA 98233

RE: Agricultural Innovation Campus at Watershed Business Park

Dear Sara,

On behalf of Skagit County, we write in support of the Port of Skagit's above referenced project. The requested funding is to support construction of an agricultural innovation building and greenhouse in the Port's Watershed Business Park, as well as development of a food system education and outreach program for local youth (STEM through Wholegrains) in collaboration with the WSU Breadlab to introduce local school children to sustainable wholegrain food systems.

The initial buildout of the Agricultural Innovation Campus at Watershed Business Park will include construction of three buildings totaling 80,000 square feet of space to house the WSU Breadlab, King Arthur Flour Baking Classroom, teaching greenhouse space, research and development space for sustainable food systems, farm technology development, value-added agricultural business development and expansion space, and complimentary office and conference space. Future construction will house a YMCA early childhood learning facility, providing affordable childcare to working families and connecting the next generation to sustainable local food systems.

The Port has been a leader in value-added agriculture research and innovation for the last 15 years in Skagit County. The project will center this important work in a business campus designed to connect and inspire the development of sustainable food systems that are (1) economically viable to the farmer, (2) safe, nutritious, and accessible to all communities, and (3) good for soil health and the environment.

The initial campus buildout is estimated to cost \$32 million. Project groundbreaking is scheduled for Summer 2023. The Port has \$4.5 million committed to infrastructure and development of this project and is seeking \$3 million to build the initial building to house Breadlab and additional research and development space, as well as an additional \$675,000 in program funding over three years to develop the STEM through Wholegrains Outreach Program.

Skagit County supports the application of the Port of Skagit for funding to build an ag innovation building and greenhouse in the Port's Watershed Business Park and develop a STEM through Wholegrains program with WSU Breadlab.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Ron Wesen, Chair

Lisa Janicki, Commissioner

Peter Browning, Commissioner