



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES

**Testimony before Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources**

**Relating to Senate Bill 5002, Appropriates moneys from General Fund to State
Department of Agriculture for certain biennial expenses**

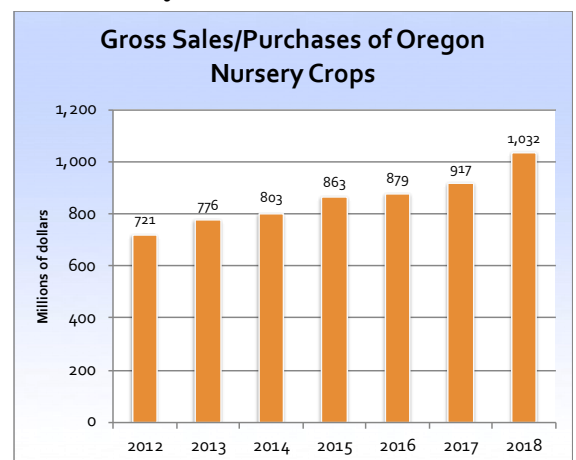
By Jeff Stone, Executive Director, Oregon Association of Nurseries
February 6, 2019

Co-Chairs Senator Taylor and Representative Reardon, members of the subcommittee, my name is Jeff Stone and I serve as the Executive Director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the issue of funding for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

The ODA is an important partner to the OAN, not only in terms of their role as a competent regulator but as a partner to ensure that Oregon remains the best at quality nursery production in the United States.

The Economic Footprint of the Nursery and Greenhouse Industry

The nursery and greenhouse industry is the state's largest agricultural sector, and the industry ranks third in the nation, with over \$948 million in sales annually to customers in Oregon, the rest of the United States, and abroad. In fact, nearly 75% of the nursery stock grown in our state leaves our borders – with over half reaching markets east of the Mississippi River. The nursery industry employs over 22,000 full time workers with an annual payroll over \$327 million. We send ecologically friendly green products out of the state and bring traded sector dollars back to Oregon.¹



Nursery association members represent wholesale plant growers, Christmas tree growers, retailers, and greenhouse operators and suppliers

¹ Chart courtesy the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture

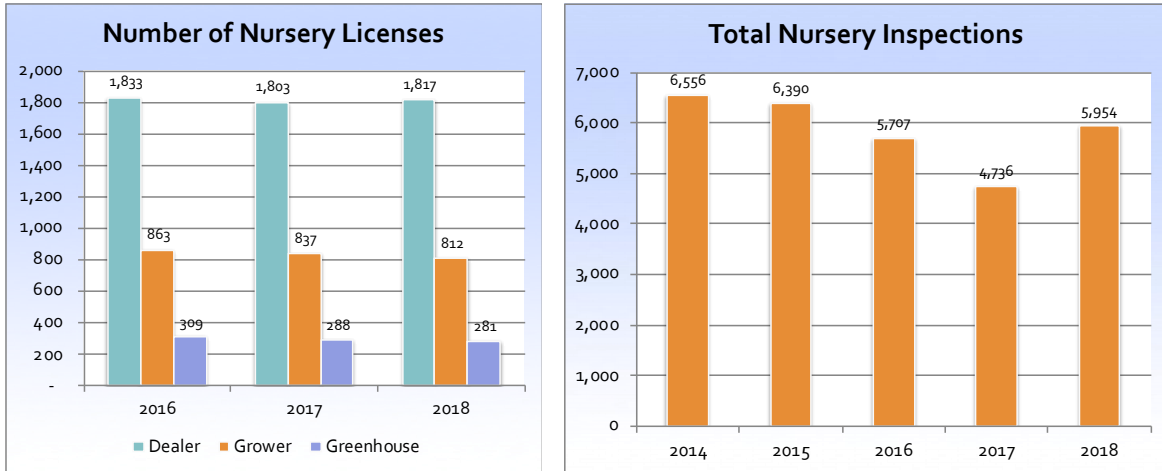
across Oregon. Our members are located throughout the state, with our largest nursery growing operations found in Clackamas, Marion, Washington, Yamhill and Multnomah Counties.

ODA programs help the industry thrive and protects plant production

The Nursery and Christmas Tree Program assists the nursery and greenhouse industry in the production, marketing and protection from pests and diseases. Oregon is recognized as a leader in pest and disease protection by assisting operations in their efforts to propagate nursery stock that is free of dangerous pathogens.

ODA staff have earned a national reputation among state plant health officials for their leadership, effectiveness, dedication and innovative approach to plant pest and disease issues. It is vitally important to preserve those ODA staff and programs that allow Oregon to quickly and effectively address emerging pest and disease threats.

2



The OAN and ODA worked jointly to create and distribute the “Safe Procurement and Production Manual: A System Approach for the Production of Health Nursery Stock”. While the manual was designed to deal with Sudden Oak Death (*P. ramorum*), it applies to all production methods and types to prevent myriad production issues.

The nursery industry pays for the program through its license fees. The license and inspection provide certainty for growers and their customers and the certification is critical for the shipment of plant material throughout the United States and abroad. The inspection of plant material entering the state is a joint venture between ODA and the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA - APHIS). Oregon growers are very careful about bringing plants into the state and behavior of a plant can vary depending on the climate. No grower benefits for bringing in an invasive species or plant into our state.

Since the industry is a significant contributor to the nursery program at ODA, it is essential for the economic well-being of the industry that this program is adequately

² Charts courtesy Oregon Dept. of Agriculture

funded. Last year, the Nursery and Christmas Tree program field staff issued almost 4,000 federal phytosanitary certificates for shipment of nursery stock to foreign countries. The ODA cooperates with USDA – APHIS to ensure the movement of Oregon nursery products to other states and foreign countries.

A few critical examples:

- Phytophthora ramorum (Sudden Oak Death): the ODA enforces federal quarantine rules which allows Oregon host nursery stock to be certified and shipped to other states and countries. The Oregon model is how the regulations are conducted at the national level and the OAN and ODA led the way.
- The nursery industry emergency fund has been used to resolve market-altering pest issues with Japanese Beetle and Boxwood Blight.
- The OAN continues to support ODA's Plant Protection programs, particularly the IPPM (Insect Pest Prevention and Management) Program, Noxious Weed Program, and the aforementioned Nursery Program to facilitating trade.

The agricultural water quality program must remain with ODA

There is a plethora of water quality policy option packages that span several state agencies (ODA, Water Resources Department and the Department of Environmental Quality). The collaboration between the agencies is critical and we appreciate the roles that each agency plays in protecting water quality and supply.

However, it is important for the subcommittee to understand that the ODA must maintain jurisdiction over water quality on agricultural lands. The ODA is performing important ongoing work on this issue through the Strategic Implementation Areas and continuous dialogue with agricultural operations. We support ODA's water quality and watershed protection. Aquatic noxious weeds have a direct impact on Oregon's water resources. Defoliator insects, such as Gypsy moth, could adversely impact riparian vegetation.

Market Development

ODA's international market development activities deliver crucial support for nursery trade initiatives. Based on a combination of federal market development funds, industry funds and ODA funding, ODA and industry have made tremendous progress during the past several years to develop market opportunities in China, Japan, Korea and Canada for Oregon nursery stock. Trade missions are important and working with working with federal partners to reduce trade barriers has true bottom line impacts.

The nursery industry is a partner and investor in ODA

It is our strong opinion that the legislature needs to adequately invest in the ODA and the programs that promote and protect Oregon's agricultural sectors.

Thank you for your time and consideration