



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

The Honorable Jeff Reardon, Co-Chair
The Honorable Kathleen Taylor, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

April 19, 2021

Re: Support for SB 5502 – Oregon Department of Agriculture Budget

Dear Co-Chairs Reardon, Taylor and Members of the Natural Resources Subcommittee:

As a public service district dedicated to providing resources, information, and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and soil health, the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District expresses general support for the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) budget as proposed in Senate Bill 5502.

Specifically, we support the continued funding of several of ODA's Plant Protection and Conservation, and Natural Resources program areas critical to our work. Program areas of most importance to us are: ODA's Noxious Weed Program including ODA's expertise and capacity in biocontrol methods and regional technical weed specialist support to cooperative weed management areas and weed boards; ODA's Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program; ODA's Water Quality Program; ODA's pesticide programs in analytics and response, investigation, stewardship, certification, training and registration; ODA's pass through funding for the Oregon Invasive Species Council and ODA's Soil and Water Conservation District Program. Examples of how farmers, forestland owners and other constituents in our service area have benefited from these ODA programs include European/Asian gypsy moth and Japanese beetle early detection and rapid response efforts in and around the Port of Portland, Sauvie Island and Tualatin Mountains; early detection of aquatic noxious weeds like *Phragmites sp.* on Sauvie Island and within Willamette River-Multnomah Channel-lower Columbia River estuaries; and the development and implementation of water quality management plans for the North Coast, Tualatin and Lower Willamette water quality management areas.

Additionally, we urge the Subcommittee to restore the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Program Manager position in the ODA Natural Resources Program. This position is critical to the operations of many of the 45 SWCDs throughout the state. Because SWCDs work in partnership with each other in order to effectively control noxious weeds and pests, and to promote healthy water and soils, the assistance available through the SWCD Program Manager position is essential to allow for these partnerships and to have a state-wide approach to best management practices of our natural resources.

Sincerely,

Terri Preeg Riggsby,
Chair and Zone 5 Director
West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

cc: West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors; Oregon Association of Conservation Districts