

WESTERN INVASIVES NETWORK

847 NW Monroe Ave. | Corvallis, OR 97330

<http://www.cascadepacific.org/western-invasives-network>

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means; Subcommittee on Natural Resources
RE: SB 5502

Distinguished members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give my testimony on behalf of the Western Invasives Network. The Western Invasives Network is Oregon's largest invasive species management cooperative and my statements today are with respect to the proposed budget allocations for the Oregon Department of Agriculture and, more specifically, the Department's Noxious Weed Control Program. During these times of fiscal uncertainty and volatility, I appreciate the challenges you face as you prioritize and address the many needs across state agencies, departments and programs to ensure the greatest impact for Oregonians. With that in mind, I submit to you that with respect to the Department's budget, there is no better investment that you could make than an investment in the Invasive Species and Noxious Weed programs.

Current recommendations call for a shift of over \$450,000 to continue the diversion of ODA weeds program staff to the industrial hemp program. The importance of investing in emerging agricultural markets and the opportunities that they provide to Oregon producers cannot be denied, however, these new investments should not come at the expense of established programs with proven performance.

ODA's Noxious Weed Program provides critical Early Detection & Rapid Response resources and services across the state. According to studies published by ODA and Oregon Dept. of Forestry, for every dollar you invest in these EDRR programs, they will return you \$34 dollars in savings on long-term management. For every dollar you invest in Biocontrol programs, it will return \$23 in benefits to the state via wages, increased market values and management savings. For every dollar you invest in containment of forest pests like sudden oak death, you'll see a \$19 return in wages that go directly into the pockets of Oregonians. Finally, for every dollar you spend on direct management of an invasive species, it will return you up to \$13. Your \$4 investment has returned \$89. Invest that \$450,000 in the same manner and Oregon's return is over \$10 million.

ODA Noxious Weed staff also manages a noxious weed grant program in partnership with OWEB. While that program took immediate cuts in the face of the pandemic; improved revenue forecasts, the demonstrated value of the program and the needs of network partners made it crystal clear that OWEB needed to restore it as soon as possible. To their credit, they did so and with proposed increases to that budget. Those grants leverage an average of 140% match but that leverage can only be realized if weeds program staff can effectively manage and implement that program.

In closing, I want to thank you again for this opportunity and repeat that while I wholeheartedly support and encourage further investment in Oregon's emerging hemp industry, I simply ask that you don't make that investment at the expense of the Noxious Weeds program.

Wishing you all good health and comfort,



Troy Abercrombie- Coordinator, Western Invasives Network

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Sources and Reference Materials to Support Testimony

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