

Testimony to Joint Ways & Means Committee of the Oregon Legislature
In support of funding for a continued service level for OSU Extension and Statewide Services
April 24, 2021, SB 5555 virtual public hearing
From Rob Guttridge, 815 Washington Street, Oregon City 97045
Co-Chairs, Co-Vice Chairs, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am part of the fourth generation to grow food and forest products on our family land in Clackamas County. My mom learned valuable skills from home extension classes in the 1940's, 50's, and 60's; I learned cool things in 4-H club in the 60's. After college in the 70's, I was pleased to find that I could continue learning cool things and valuable skills useful in growing food and forest products thanks to the resources provided by OSU Extension Services. Over the years I have read many OSU publications, and attended workshops and classes, that have helped me in my efforts to sustain a family farm begun in the 19th century well into the 21st century.

These days I am one of the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of volunteers statewide who help OSU Extension share knowledge and teach practical skills to our neighbors and other community members. Throughout Oregon, Extension-trained 4-H Club leaders, Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, Master Naturalists, Master Recyclers, Master Food Preservers, and others amplify a small investment in informal education into a huge public benefit.

In the past year, I have seen Extension staff keep valuable programs alive, despite Covid-19 challenges and budget cuts, by pivoting to increased virtual teaching. In the coming biennium they will be able to pivot back: but only if the Legislature restores and provides the needed funding to address the challenges the future will surely bring. I ask you to fully fund the continued service level for Oregon Statewide Public Services. Thank you.