



House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources Support HB 2531: State Agency Collaboration on Pollinator Health Plan

February 2, 2020

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

We are writing you today on behalf of Oregonians for Food and Shelter (OFS), the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN), and the Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFB) to provide comments in support of House Bill 2531. OFS is a grassroots coalition representing farmers, foresters, and technology users focused on natural resources issues in Oregon. OAN represents the nursery and greenhouse industry, which is the state's largest agricultural sector. Oregon's elite nursery growers send ecologically friendly green products out of the state and bring traded sector dollars back to Oregon. OFB is the state's largest general agriculture association, representing 7,000 families actively engaged in farming and ranching. Oregon farmers and beekeepers share a vested interest in ensuring that both bees and crops can be kept safe and healthy and support this effort in HB 2531 to further that goal.

Our organizations have long supported proactive efforts to address pollinator health through statewide outreach and education. We also appreciate Representative Jeff Reardon's hard work to advocate for pollinator health and ensure the issue is a prioritized by Oregon's state agencies and land grant university. We should all be proud of Oregon's efforts to promote pollinator health, which have become a model for other states.

In 2015 the Oregon legislature passed legislation that led to the creation of the innovative Oregon Bee Project, housed within Oregon State University in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Department of Forestry. The Oregon Bee Project was founded on the principle of collaboration between farmers, beekeepers, and other stakeholders in order to reduce the risk of pesticide exposure, promote colony health, increase pollinator habitat, and increase education and outreach. The Oregon Bee Project has successfully created a space for collaboration around pollinator health in the state of Oregon.

HB 2531 builds on that spirit of collaboration by bringing in other state agencies—the Oregon State Forestry Department, the Department of Transportation, and the State Department of Fish and Wildlife—as consulting agencies to the plan. This makes sense as all three agencies have natural resource and land management responsibilities. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Forestry is already been a visible partner in the Oregon Bee Project.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2531 today. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of our coalition with any questions related to this testimony.

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