



SUPPORT HB 2610: Fund research on new tools for Oregon's specialty crops

Oregon's agricultural sector is uniquely composed of "specialty" crops. These account for the vast majority of the 240 different commodities grown throughout the state including fruit, vegetables, hazelnuts, mint, hops, specialty seeds, Christmas trees, nursery products, and many more.

Organic and conventional specialty crop growers rely on pesticides to protect crops from damaging weeds, insects, and diseases. Despite being a top producing state for many US specialty crops, these crops are considered minor markets in the U.S with a lower production volume than other major crops (field, grain, or forage crops like wheat, corn, alfalfa, hay). The development of new pest management tools for minor markets is not the primary objective of the private sector, which leads to limited pesticide options for Oregon's specialty crops and a reliance on older pesticides, despite the availability of newer, reduced-risk products available for use in other, larger-market crops.

Oregon can address this with investments in an existing program that supports Oregon's specialty crops and markets. Through Oregon State University, Oregon participates in a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program called "IR-4," which has been the leading program supporting research and registration of new pest management tools for specialty crop growers. This program takes newly registered pesticides (including biopesticides and organic-approved products) from major crops and conducts field trials to identify safe and effective new tools to control various pests in many important specialty crops. This data is used to support new labels and uses of these products through collaboration with the US Environmental Protection Agency. However, this program's capacity is limited by insufficient funding relative to priorities and needs, particularly in a specialty crop state.

HB 2610 will accelerate the registration of new and reduced-risk pest management tools for Oregon's specialty crops by:

- Investing \$1,000,000 from the General Fund in an ongoing program at Oregon State University, the IR-4 program; and
- Expanding capacity to conduct field trials to identify safe and effective new tools for a large number of priority crop/pest combinations.

HB 2610 will help to sustain and advance Oregon's specialty crop industries through investments in research to identify new, safe, and effective tools to manage devastating pests. HB 2610 acknowledges that it requires significant resources to conduct the research necessary to ensure that specialty crop growers have access to effective and affordable tools that utilize new technologies and prioritize the protection of human and environmental health.

Vote yes on HB 2610

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