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**Public hearing before the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use,  
Natural Resources and Water**

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*HB 3098*

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman, and Owens

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, please accept this testimony on HB 3098, which directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to establish a farmworker outreach program in consultation with the Pesticide Analytical Research Center (PARC). We appreciate the direction of HB 3098 in establishing a farmworker outreach program at the ODA. However, there are critical elements missing in ensuring success of this program that we'd like to highlight and urge this committee to adopt.

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) is a state-wide non-profit law firm whose mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. OLC is committed to efforts designed to remove systemic barriers to safety, stability, and security for our client communities.

One of the communities we serve is the migrant and seasonal farmworker population. Apart from the legal services we provide, OLC's Farmworker Program also conducts outreach to farmworkers and provides critical information on their rights, available resources, and referrals. We've advocated for many years to improve the safety, health, and well-being of farmworkers.

We appreciate the effort to create a farmworker outreach program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture to conduct outreach and distribute to farmworkers educational materials related to safe pesticide use, health and environmental incidents involving pesticides and procedures for reporting pesticide incidents, among other things.

A program like this has a good intent. However, there are important components missing from this proposal. We want to share our concerns and solutions to ensure this program can successfully carry out the directives in this proposal.

It is paramount that **community input in the development of the farmworker outreach program, materials, and training**, especially from farmworkers and farmworker serving organizations is included in the proposal to ensure the program is carried out in a *culturally*

*sensitive* way as HB 3098 spells out. The proposed bill needs to detail what is meant by culturally sensitive. Farmworker serving organizations in Oregon have decades of expertise and knowledge on working with farmworkers. Their voice, and the voice of farmworkers, is missing from this proposal and without the expertise and knowledge they hold to help shape the program and the pesticide applicator training, the intent falls short. For example, we'd like the training to have time for farmworkers to ask questions free from retaliation and be conducted by trained facilitators. And any materials developed need to be created with input from farmworkers and farmworker serving organizations to ensure integrity.

We propose that the Oregon Department of Agriculture not only consult with PARC, but also set up processes to consult other key stakeholders like farmworker organizations in the development of this program, the pesticide applicator training, and any educational materials.

Many farmworkers speak Mesoamerican indigenous languages such as Mam, Mixtec, Zapotec, Purepécha, and Nahuatl. Language access is critical. We strongly support access to educational material not only in English and Spanish, but also the top five Mesoamerican languages in mediums that make sense for the communities (for example, videos that have been field tested). Without language accessible pesticide information, the program will fall short of its goals. We'd like to see language access specific amendment to HB 3098.

The Oregon Law Center respectfully urges this committee to ensure the above components are added to HB 3098. With the above additions to the proposal, HB 3098 will be far stronger and live up to its intent. In the meantime, the Oregon Law Center does not support this proposal as written until these necessary and common-sense amendments are incorporated in the policy. We have sent the sponsor amendment language before the hearing and look forward to engaging with stakeholders to strengthen this proposal and support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.