

Dear Senator Dembrow, Representative Pham, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources:

I am writing to you in support of the Department of Agriculture's (DOA) 2023-2025 Budget: HB 5002.

And, asking you to recommend that the current funding for the Native Plant Conservation Program, as specified in the DOA's 2023-2025 Requested Budget, be included in the final Legislatively Approved Budget.

I am submitting this testimony on HB 5022 as the Vice President and Legislative Chair of the Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO). Our organization was founded in Portland in 1961. As our mission statement says, we are "Dedicated to the enjoyment, conservation, and study of Oregon's native plants and habitats". We have 13 chapters with over 1,200 members located throughout Oregon. If you would like to learn more about NPSO please go to: [npsoregon](https://www.npsoregon.org)

First, I want to acknowledge NPSO's gratitude for the support and leadership of Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair of the 2021 Regular Session Joint Ways and Means Committee. It was his leadership that restored essential funding to DOA's Native Plant Conservation Program.

NPSO members were instrumental in the 1987 Legislative Assembly's **unanimous passage** of the Oregon Endangered Species Act (ORS 496.171 to 496.192, 498.026 and 564.100 to 564.135). Under that law, the ODA's Native Plant Conservation Program is responsible for updating the state rare plant list. Please read the LEGISLATIVE POLICY AND RESEARCH OFFICE'S *Background Brief* for more information: <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lpro/Publications/Background-Brief-Endangered-Species-2018.pdf>

However, for years there had been little work done on state listed species because there was no state funding for the program. The Oregon Native Plant Conservation Program was only working on federally listed plant species. (The ODA does get federal funds to work on federally listed species and projects.) The state rare plant list has not been updated since its original inception in 1988. By law (ORS 496.176 (8)), the list is to be periodically reviewed every 5-years.

The Governor's 2023-2025 Proposed Budget is a 35.8% decrease from the 2021-2023 Legislatively Approved Budget. While the decrease may be "due to phasing out of funding, including Oregon Agricultural Disaster Relief, meat inspection, and other one-time funds" I am concerned that the current funding for Oregon Native Plant Conservation Program is also in jeopardy.

The current funding has allowed the Oregon Native Plant Conservation Program to get back on track in meeting its statutory mandate and fulfilling its mission. Please continue your support for the program in your recommendations for the DOA's 2023-2025 Budget.