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14 March, 2023

Chair Helm and Members
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use,
Natural Resources, and Water
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3366, Funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3366. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 45 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choices. We created our Food Systems Program in 2015 to expand our work with partner organizations throughout the state that are working together to build and strengthen robust and healthy food systems across Oregon. Success in achieving that goal is heavily dependent of retaining the productive capacity of the right amount of the right types of farmland, in the right places.

Oregon's land use planning program is one of the tools we rely on to protect productive farm and ranch land. However, this program is only as strong as the political will to keep it in place, and over the years since its creation nearly 60 uses have been allowed on farmland, gradually weakening the protections provided. (These uses and their impacts on farming were detailed in a [recent report by 1000 Friends](#).) At the same time, Oregon faces an unprecedented transfer of ownership of agricultural land in the coming decades as a significant percentage of our farmers retire and pass their land on to others.

It was in recognition of these factors that the legislature created the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2017. Once fully implemented, OAHP will provide transition planning services for farmers and ranchers and leverage large amounts of federal funding to help willing families invest in permanent or long-term protection of their farms and ranches. Since the program was put in place, OWEB has created a Commission to oversee the program, adopted rules to govern grant programs to implement the program, and identified funding needs for the program.

The funding provided under HB 3366 would, for the first time since the program was created, allow for fully staffing the program. It would also provide funding to operate the program

which, importantly, can be used to leverage matching federal funding to increase the program's reach and impact.

We urge you to support HB 3366 and provide full funding for the OAHP. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Holmes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Holmes
Food Systems Program Director
1000 Friends of Oregon