

Submitter: Gavin Carman

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural
Resources

Measure: HB5002

Dear members of the committee,

Tri-County CWMA is writing in support of the Department of Agriculture's budget bill HB 5002.

The Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) manages noxious weed projects across nearly 5.1 million acres of land encompassing Union, Baker, and Wallowa Counties in Northeastern Oregon. Tri-County CWMA works closely with the ODA noxious weed control program to plan, coordinate, and implement noxious weed control projects. The ODA noxious weed control program is essential to supporting our local agriculture and protecting our natural resources in Eastern Oregon.

Funding from the OSWB grant program is vital for Tri-County to continue its noxious weed control programs. Tri-County receives no tax revenues, local or state. The primary source of funding is through grants and assistance agreements, which provide revenues for specific projects and staff time. The funding from the OSWB allows Tri-County to expand inventory and treatment areas of priority noxious weeds, identify new infestations, and provide educational/outreach materials to landowners. Not only does the OSWB grant funding support Tri-County staff positions, but Tri-County uses the grant funds to hire local, licensed, commercial pesticide applicators to complete noxious weed control projects in Eastern Oregon, adding valuable jobs to our local economy.

Noxious weeds negatively affect agricultural lands, rangelands, pasture and hay production, wildlife habitat, recreation areas, and many other resources that help sustain rural economies. If these invading weed species were left uncontrolled, it would have a major economic impact on Eastern Oregon communities as well as the state of Oregon.

A key component of the ODA noxious weed control program is early detection and rapid response (EDRR) treatments. To effectively control noxious weeds it is essential to act fast when small infestations are found before they grow into unmanageable populations. Continued funding of the ODA noxious weed control program and OSWB grants will allow weed managers to carry on its early detection rapid response (EDRR) projects in Eastern Oregon.

ODA noxious weed control program staff does an excellent job of education and

outreach in our region. Aquatic invasive plants and invasive annual grasses have been the focus of many recent planning and outreach meetings. ODA staff are leading the way in coordinating efforts between agencies and helping to educate land managers on these increasing threats to our management areas.

In closing, a tremendous amount of work has gone into the prevention and treatment of noxious weed infestations in Northeastern Oregon. Maintaining noxious weed control programs will help protect our greatest asset: our local natural resources. Tri-County CWMA recommends funding the Department of Agriculture's budget bill HB 5002.

Thank you.