

Joint Committee On Ways and Means:

Hello, my name is John Albertson, and I am here today in support of HB3366 and the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, OAHP. My wife and I own a ranch in Lake County near Lakeview, and I am also partners with eight siblings in ranch lands that were homesteaded by my grandparents in 1913. Both properties have been family owned for decades and they are incredibly unique. My home place is 750 acres and consists of 13 tax lots. Ten of these lots are identified as OVL (Oregon Valley Land). These lots were created by Federal and State legislation dating back to 1864. The Department of the Interior granted the state of Oregon land to be used to construct a military wagon road from Eugene to the eastern boundary of the state. The land granted to the state of Oregon was then granted to the Oregon Central Military Wagon Road Company to construct the road. In the fall of 1909, after the road was completed, the Oregon Valley Land Company was commissioned to sell the remaining unfulfilled land grants. 14,000 parcels of rural land totaling 340,000 acres were sold in one week. These OVL lots are interspersed in many ranches in Lake County. Due to their high value for residential homesites they are sometimes sold which contributes to the fragmentation of ranches in Lake County.

Our ranch is managed for both wildlife and agriculture. In the past 20 years we have developed 140 acres of shallow reservoirs and wetlands for migrating waterfowl. The ranch is home to 50 to 60 mule deer from early spring through late fall that utilize one of the largest stands of Basin Big Sagebrush left in the Goose Lake Valley. We are proud of the wide open spaces that we share with family, friends and the public. It is our hope to preserve these large tracts of land into perpetuity and the conservation easement programs funded through OAHP can help make that a reality. We have attached a short video that represents a small portion of the habitat that our ranch provides. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

