



February 5, 2024

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

We write to you today to express our strong support for HB 4060, which would provide \$10.8 million in state funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP).


OAHP protects farm and ranch land from development through working farmland easements which keep acres in production and enhance natural resource values. Without state funding in 2024, \$7.2 million already allocated to Oregon through the Natural Resources Conservation Service for this work risks being returned to the federal government.

Farmland in the service area of East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is at a high risk of conversion. Farmland in production in Multnomah County decreased by 15% (4,548 acres) from 2012 to 2017¹. EMSWCD is tackling this challenge via an active working farmland protection program funded via a portion of our tax levy, as we related on a tour of an EMSWCD protected farm project this past fall with several Oregon legislators. However, as we also shared on that tour, we are unable to leverage our limited funds given the lack of a stable source of funding from Oregon. And our success in protecting working farmland is indicative of what could be achieved throughout Oregon if other organizations were able to rely on funding via OAHP.

With \$10.8 million in state funding for OAHP, Oregon can leverage already awarded federal dollars to invest in our vital farm and ranchlands. These investments will protect tens of thousands of agricultural acres across our diverse geography.

Please support passage of HB 4060 in the 2024 legislative session. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky (Feb 5, 2024 17:53 PST)

Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky
Board Chair, East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

¹ 2017 United States Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture




Second OAHF Letter of Support

Final Audit Report

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