

HB 3131 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

Action Date: 02/12/25

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 8-0-1-0

Yeas: 8 - Boice, Hartman, Helm, Levy B, Marsh, McDonald, McLain, Owens

Exc: 1 - Scharf

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 1/22, 1/27, 2/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure appropriates \$17.3 million from the General Fund to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) for deposit in the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund (OAHF) and establishes OWEB's maximum limit for expense payment from the OAHF as \$17.3 million. The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on its passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of balancing working lands and land preservation
- Agrivoltaics in the context of farmland preservation

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund (OAHF) was established as part of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2017 to help address challenges for farms and ranches associated with farmland fragmentation and conversions, complex regulations, and planning for generational transfers. The program provides voluntary incentives to farmers and ranchers to support practices that maintain or enhance agricultural and natural resources. In 2022, the Legislative Assembly approved \$5 million for the OAHP, which provided grants for nine projects throughout Oregon. The grant awards funded conservation easements for seven land trust grantees, and conservation management plan assistance for the High Desert Partnership and Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council.