

To: House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water Committee

Monday, January 20, 2025

From: RJ Cook

RE: In support of HB 3131 and \$17.3 Million in funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2025-2027 Budget

I am writing to you today to share the JP and Susie Cook Family members strong support for HB 3131 and its \$17.3 million in funding the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session. On June 12th 2025 we will be starting our 125th year of stewardship of our Heritage farm in Hazelia area just across the UGB line with south Lake Oswego.

We are a State Century Farm, home to a State of Oregon and Clackamas County Heritage Tree Grove, a stop along the Hazelia Agri-Cultural Heritage Trail and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Shipley-Cook Farmstead- Barn build in 1860, house built 1n 1862. The property is home to the “only remaining” domicile that housed Chinese Migrant Labors in the late 1860’s thru early 1880 in the region. (Two small rooms build over the woodshed connected to the house)

Our Family along with the Stafford Hamlet have recently join the Willamette Falls and Landings National Heritage Coalition to preserve and share our rich history and community contributions to our State and Nation’s Heritage and development.

As a one-time 130-acre farming family, we are now down to 6 acres that we are trying to maintain and celebrate our contributions to the area’s history and contributions to our community. Our family motto- Six Generations – One Legacy. We’re hoping for another 125 years.

It is becoming harder and harder to survive in these economic times with little assistance and opportunities to secure a conservation easement for small private historical farm.

As a family, we have helped lead a local group advocating for a Rural-Urban Interface through Active-Agriculture with Conservation Easements and a Succession/Transition plan for our property. All while helping champion a possible “Stafford Regional Climate Action Plan”, with Metro, Clackamas County, Lake Oswego, West Linn, Tualatin and Wilsonville as we are surround by 4 of the top 5 greenhouse gas emitters in the region.

So, as you can see, 125 years of stewardship, we might be one of the best “Poster Farms” for advocating for HB 3131 for funding the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session.

The work of Oregon Heritage Agricultural Program is a vital element to fund and distribute through organizations like Oregon Agricultural Trust and others that have been doing great work with little support from the State of Oregon.

It is time to acknowledge the work that is being done and needs to be done by fully funding HB 3131 and \$17.3 Million in funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2025-2027 Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 3131, which we strongly support.

RJ Cook
for JP and Susie Family Farm
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