

Submitter: Leah Rodgers

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3131

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you today to express my strong support for HB 3131, which will fund the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) with \$17.3 million in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session. OAHP helps Oregon leverage a remarkable 2:1 federal match through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and protects working ranches and farmlands for their agricultural and natural resource values.

I am a first-generation farmer and landowner. I have been farming in western Oregon for twenty years and I am deeply passionate about agriculture. After many years of confronting land access barriers, we purchased our farm in 2024. I feel strongly that the OAHP is a crucial tool for protecting precious ag land in our state. I support this program for many reasons. The top reasons are it allows farmers to realize some of the equity in their land without selling part of the farm or selling to developers; it provides technical assistance to help farmers adapt to climate change and adopt climate-friendly practices, and its programs help farmers find the next generation to take over the land and keep it in production.

I do not have children or a family member who will continue farming on our beloved land when I am no longer able and I intend to use OAHP, provided there is funding, to keep my land productive long after I am gone.

Thank you,
Leah Rodgers

Owner/ Operator of Indigo Gardens