

Submitter: Wesley Ward

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3131

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

From: ORGANIZATION/NAME

RE: Supporting HB 3131 and \$17.3 Million in funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHF) in 2025-2027 Budget

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

I have followed the success of the Oregon Agricultural Trust and the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program the beginning of both programs. I moved to Oregon from Massachusetts in 2016, with a background of direct experience in the similar Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program that began in 1978 and continues to receive strong annual support from the Massachusetts Legislature and taxpayers. While OAT has been able to attract substantial philanthropy in support of its work, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program needs continued and expanded funding to respond to the growing interest expressed by numerous Oregon farm owners. While the Oregon land use law has helped to conserve Oregon's incredibly valuable farmland, substantial losses occur every year. The Oregon AHP program is essential to supplement the Oregon land use law, reduce the amount of farmland loss, and keep high quality farmland available and affordable for the next generation of farmers.

Thank you,

Wesley Ward, Portland, Oregon