

Submitter: Jason Clinch

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

February 3, 2025

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

Re: HB 3173 (Oregon Flora) - SUPPORT

Dear Committee members:

I am the principal biologist for Three Creeks Consulting LLC, a small environmental consulting firm that works on wetland-related and land management projects, as well as botanical survey/inventory projects across Oregon. I am also a native plant gardener and enthusiast and a Director-at-Large for the Native Plant Society of Oregon.

I strongly support HB 3173.

Being an environmental consultant means I wear a lot of different hats and have an understanding of a lot of different industries, land uses, and environmental conditions. I work with developers, farmers, ranchers, forest managers, and conservation land trust managers in identifying existing habitats and vegetation and recommending plant species to be used in mitigation, restoration, and revegetation projects (wetland and otherwise). I use OregonFlora information daily in my work to help identify these botanical resources. OregonFlora helps me know what plants have been documented nearby and how to identify them, including invasive species and species that are rare or of conservation concern. I use the OregonFlora plant identification tools and fact sheets almost daily to document plant diversity on these properties and to recommend and integrate locally native and ecologically preferable plants into these restoration and revegetation projects. The presentation of plant occurrences from multiple datasets on OregonFlora lets me gather and compare this information more efficiently. Not only does this help drive business toward the expanding native plant horticultural industry for mitigation, restoration, and revegetation materials (an economic benefit), but it provides even bigger ecological benefits to me and my fellow Oregonians. Knowing that the OregonFlora data is curated by professional taxonomists gives me assurance that my work is accurate and can be shared with others. Knowing that my cohorts in the native plant horticultural industry also use OregonFlora as a resource, gives us a common tool and point of reference when discussing these projects.

As a member of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, I rely on the information from OregonFlora to both enhance my appreciation of the natural world and to share that appreciation and knowledge with other Oregon residents. I often peruse the various inventories and species list on OregonFlora before picking where to go on my next "botanical adventure". My contributions of plant occurrences and collections have helped build OregonFlora as a public resource and one that should not simply go away due to a lack of funding one day. The scholarly curation of the information by the OregonFlora team means it is accurate and valuable for both professional and casual use.

As we continue to experience with even more frequency, wildfire, drought, and rising temperatures are adversely impacting our lives and the lands we live on. Healthy and sustainable ecosystems are critical to Oregon's economy because they support industries in timber, recreation and tourism, conservation, and hunting and fishing, as well as providing clean water, air, and soil. Understanding how to identify and sustain the plant communities present in these ecosystems is part of what will keep them healthy into the future. The OregonFlora database manages and shares ~1.5 million Oregon plant occurrence records through interactive mapping tools on its website. This comprehensive dataset is essential to understanding which plant communities and ecosystems might be vulnerable to climate change-induced events. Importantly, it provides the core reference information needed to mitigate and restore landscapes that might be damaged by these events.

I urge your support of House Bill 3173 to ensure that OregonFlora can continue to be maintained and developed for users statewide.

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