

Submitter: Tom Wainwright

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

Dear Committee Members,

As a professional conservation ecologist with over 30 years of experience, I strongly support HB 3173 to stabilize and sustain the Oregon Flora Program. Although retired, I volunteer to maintain plant species inventories for our local land trust and conduct rare plant surveys in support of State conservation assessments. I am a member of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, a certified Oregon Naturalist, and lead educational walks and hikes for the general public. For all these activities, I am a regular user of the Oregon Flora Program, both online and via its publications. I am also a monthly supporting contributor to its budget. I am aware that the program accomplishes much on a shoestring budget, but also know that their existence has been threatened several times recently by insufficient money to maintain their work.

The work of the Oregon Flora Program is important to a number of state and local government programs as well as private activities. In managing natural lands (forests, rangelands, parks, and wilderness), identifying and tracking species is a foundational task - without it the job cannot be done. Similarly for rare, threatened, and endangered species conservation, a statewide inventory of species and their locations is essential. For agriculture, the ability to identify and track weed invasions is also fundamental to their control. Oregon Flora Program supports all of these activities, providing great public benefit at moderate cost. It provides vital data to state and local government agencies, private land developers, consultants, non-profits, and the general public.

This is a program with high public benefits, and I urge you to support HB 3173 that will maintain these benefits into the future.

Best regards,
Tom Wainwright, PhD
Bend, Oregon