

Submitter: Stella Coakley

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

This letter is written in strong support of Oregon House Bill 3173 to establish OregonFlora in statute and initiate a sustainable funding stream of \$400K per biennium to maintain and continue the development of OregonFlora's dynamic dataset.

The Oregon Flora project, to date, has been funded from numerous sources, but without any recurring state of Oregon funding. It is quite remarkable what the project has accomplished by piecing together donations from the private sector and grants from organizations such as the Native Plant Society of Oregon, which has been a sponsor since its inception in 1994. Based on the productivity of the project to date, establishing a recurring support for the State is both justified and an excellent investment for Oregon citizens.

The history of the project can be found <https://oregonflora.org/pages/mission.php> but this is a brief synopsis:

Dr. Scott Sundberg began the work of the Oregon Flora project in 1994 and continued that work until his untimely death in 2004; his vision was ultimately realized through the leadership of Dr. Linda Hardison and the work of few paid staff and many volunteers. I have a long knowledge of this project because I was Department Head in Botany and Plant Pathology through 2003 and then moved to become an associate dean in the College of Agricultural Sciences until retiring in 2015. I remain aware of the project's progress through serving on the Agricultural Research Foundation Board and through personal donations to the project. While the project was physically housed within the Department, there were no available funds for salaries and associated costs for the project. That support was raised entirely from the tireless work of Dr. Hardison and the many volunteers who joined in the effort.

I have been astounded by the progress the project has made both in the published Flora and the online resources which increase the scientific literacy of Oregonians. Numerous Oregonians benefit including Master Gardener and Naturalist programs, pollinator conservation, Native Plant Society of Oregon activities, backyard habitat certification, wildflower shows, Conservation District native plant sales, and natural areas/nature centers.

I strongly encourage the House to pass HB 3173 in support of OregonFlora. This would be an excellent investment for the future of Oregonians that will directly or indirectly benefit from this program continuing into the future.

Sincerely,

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