

Submitter: Linda Gilbert

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

I am writing in support of HB 3173 which would establish the OregonFlora Program at Oregon State University. I have been an Oregon resident since 1996, about the time that work was started to produce and publish an Oregon Flora. It's been almost 30 years and only 2 of 3 volumes have been finished using a minimum of paid staff, funded by grants and donations, and many volunteers and students. The project has expanded to include online resources which has complicated the process. I have seen the commitment behind the project that keeps it going, and the lack of adequate financial support. to

A significant part of Oregon's economy is based on natural resources, including native plants. It is important to understand what plants grow in the state and how that is changing since it affects resource-based industries like ranching, farming and forestry. Government land managers and non-profits that manage lands, as well as researchers studying these lands, all need good information about the state's flora in order to do their work and make decisions.

Good data about plants is also needed as we confront climate change. More people are planting natives on their property to reduce water use as well as to support wildlife and beneficial insects. Native plant nurseries are expanding to meet this demand. A centralized resource that provides information about the location of native plants in the state and their growing requirements would greatly help this effort.

I enjoy learning about the flora of the state as I seek to be an informed citizen with a connection to my environment. I have the Oregon Flora app on my phone and use it regularly. The Oregon Flora Project includes many online resources that are user-friendly and can be used by students and interested people of all ages. This kind of widely available database about a resource specific to our state should not be completely supported by a variable supply of grants and donations. I favor providing state tax dollars to keep information about Oregon's flora updated and continuously available.