

Submitter: Eugene Yates

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

Dear Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water:

Thank you for taking up this important bill.

I am writing in support of HB 3173 to establish the OregonFlora Program at Oregon State University. Permanent establishment and funding of this small program would have an outsize benefit to all Oregonians, plus Oregon's public and private colleges and universities, as well as state agencies (e.g. Agriculture, Higher Education, Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, State Parks) that depend on this service.

Oregon has 4,886 unique plant species that grow without cultivation. Of these, 70% are native species, and 120 are endemic and grow only in Oregon. The oregonflora.org website offers sophisticated search and plant identification tools, 1.48 million mappable plant occurrence records, 63,000+ color field photos, and fact sheets for every plant taxon.

Oregon's economy depends upon its botanical resources. Healthy forests, productive rangelands, agricultural operations, outdoor recreation sites, and native plant horticultural businesses all need reliable data which OregonFlora provides. As a retired botanist and volunteer citizen scientist, I depend heavily on the Oregon Flora Project and especially its online applications to carry out my work and enjoyment of our abundant natural resources

The requested support will leverage 30 years of research, volunteer effort, and citizen science contributions to develop the OregonFlora resources. Sustainable support will help ensure it is maintained.

We can manage only what we know we have in our borders. The Oregon Flora Project plays a pivotal role accomplishing that.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Eugene Yates  
Baker City