



February 4, 2025

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

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: **Support HB 3173, OregonFlora**

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens and Committee Members,

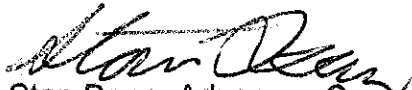
The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), special districts governed by elected boards. The districts protect and improve soil health, water quality and quantity, and natural habitat by fostering voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

OACD supports HB 3173. Understanding the vegetation of the wide range of environments throughout Oregon is necessary for us to complete our mission of conservation. We rely on the OregonFlora's user friendly, accessible and free database to determine the best plants to use in specific environments. The information focuses on native plants as well as introduced species because we need to understand both to manage our resources effectively. Important uses of this tool include:

- OregonFlora has the most up to date information on plant names (which change often), ranges, and characteristics for plants.
- The photos, descriptions, and range maps are invaluable for helping to identify unknown plants which might include invasive species new to a site, or uncommon/rare/threatened plants.
- Identifying unknown plants is critical for SWCD conservation work since it allows us to recognize and then manage appropriately for invasive, native, and uncommon/rare/threatened plants species.
- OregonFlora helps inform district staff development of conservation plans and planting recommendations.
- The OregonFlora database is a great resource to educate the public about plants so they can conduct conservation work on their own property or in their community.

The bill provides essential ongoing funding . While the amount of data compiled by OregonFlora is impressive, it will remain a work in progress due to ongoing maintenance and information updating. One time funding would make long term success difficult.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.



Stan Dean, Advocacy Committee Chair
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