



February 5, 2025

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

Re: HB 3173 (Oregon Flora) – SUPPORT

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Committee Members:

Friends of the Columbia Gorge (“Friends”) is a non-profit organization with approximately 5,000 members. Friends is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Wildfire, drought, and rising temperatures are adversely impacting our lives and the land we live on. The OregonFlora database manages and shares ~1.5 million Oregon plant occurrence records through interactive mapping tools on its website. This comprehensive dataset is essential to understanding which plant communities might be vulnerable to climate change-induced events. Importantly, it provides the core information needed to restore damaged landscapes. OregonFlora is an important resource for the restoration work that Friends does to improve habitat in the Columbia River Gorge.

OregonFlora is a vital resource not only for the Columbia River Gorge, but for the growing number of individuals, gardeners, landscapers, and professionals who understand the value of our native flora. OregonFlora is singular and unique in the information and resources that it collates and disseminates to the public. It has facilitated research on Oregon's native plants and the formulation of data on our native plant species into key volumes of printed material, as well as user-friendly online references. OregonFlora also provides increasingly vital information about native plants regarding their use in landscaping, which is a timely and growing movement among gardeners and landscapers seeking solutions to the threats our local biodiversity is currently facing.

We urge your support of House Bill 3173 to ensure the resources of OregonFlora can continue to be maintained and developed for users statewide.

Sincerely,

Renée Tkach
Conservation Director