

Submitter: Jana Castanares
On Behalf Of: all the people critters and plants who live here
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Natural Resources
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5039

Thanks for this opportunity to submit testimony. I strongly support the proposed \$17.3 million in funding OAHF in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session.

I want to take a moment to explain why I personally am such a strong supporter.

I was born in Portland, Oregon. Thirteen years ago, my husband and I retired to Mount Hood Parkdale, Oregon from Los Angeles. (Yes, quite a switch!) We live in the downtown area of Parkdale, which is five blocks long.

One of the first things I noticed was the quality of the soil here. I've never seen anything like it. One day I had to dig a trench 3 feet deep and 30 feet long from the house to the garage for an electrician, and there was not a rock to be found. Just beautiful, fertile, reddish earth. I'm an old bat, but it only took me a few hours to dig that trench with a plain old shovel. And I thought to myself, "Wow, it's almost a crime that this house is here. This earth is too rich to be developed--it should be reserved for growing food." I've since learned that most of the land around me does belong to farmers, and that Oregon's land use laws have been instrumental in protecting agricultural lands, which makes me happy. But there are continual threats to its remaining in the hands of farmers.

Growing up in cities, I never really thought about farming and I'm embarrassed to say that it took me a couple years after digging that trench before I noticed what a risky business it is. Ordinary weather variation, now greatly amplified by climate change, and complex labor, pricing, and distribution issues have made food production increasingly risky and difficult to manage and plan for. It probably took me another year to say, "Wait! If it's this hard to make money farming when you already own the land, what's gonna happen when farmers' kids just decide to bail? How could anybody make a living here if they have to actually BUY the farmland??!!" Not long after that I started supporting the work of the Oregon Agricultural Trust.

So today, when I looked up the stack of reasons other people have for supporting this funding for OAHF (which I've copied below), It was easy for me to see its value:

"OAHF helps Oregon leverage a remarkable 2:1 federal match through programs including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and protects working ranch and farmlands for their agriculture and natural resource values. Allows farmers to realize some of the equity in their

land without selling part of the farm or selling to developers....

- Works with farmers on a voluntary basis to maintain and improve farm production while preserving ag land and conserving natural habitat.

- Technical assistance helps farmers adapt to climate change and adopt climate-friendly practices,

- Programs help farmers find the next generation to take over the land and keep it in production.

- Has broad support across the industry and bipartisan support in the legislature - a no brainer!

- The Climate Action Commission has repeatedly recommended funding for OAHP as an important part of Natural and Working Land climate mitigation."

They say all that better than I could. I'm not a writer and don't work in the business; I'm not even an activist. But I'd have to be brain-dead to know what I do know and not think this funding is extremely important. Please make it happen!

Jana Castanares