

2/25/25

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Jack Gray
Oak Pond LLC

RE: H.B. 5039, Support for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program and OWEB 2025-2027 Budget

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Levy, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB) 2025-2027 budget, especially the inclusion of funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP).

I write to you today to share my strong support for \$17.3 million in funding OAHP in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session. OAHP 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.

My wife and I are recently retired farmers and even though we have our farm leased out we are now actively planning the future of our farm. The programs and options that OAHP offers opens up a whole new set of possibilities for farmers, like us, to consider and use. We very much want our land to be continued to be farmed and OAHP will help this happen. It will help increase farm profitability in the face of a changing climate, provide a needed avenue for beginning farmers to get on farms, and it has broad bipartisan, industry and Climate Action Commission support.

Please support and recommend the passage of this important bill.

Thank you,
Jack Gray
Owner/Manager Oak Pond LLC and formerly of Winter Green Farm.