



February 26, 2025

Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources

RE: Support of House Bill 5039, OAHP

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 5039 and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's 2025-2027 budget, specifically the \$17.3 million needed to fully fund the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP).

Tillamook County Creamery Association is a 116-year-old farmer-owned, and farmer-led cooperative committed to doing right by the land, our farmers, and the communities we serve. Stewardship is at the heart of our work—we focus on protecting air, land, and water while ensuring farms remain viable for generations which is essential not just for our cooperative, but for Oregon's food system and rural economy.

Yet Oregon's farmland is disappearing. Without action, more working lands will be lost to development, making it harder for farmers to sustain their operations and for new generations to enter the industry. OAHP is a proven tool to address this challenge. By supporting voluntary working land easements, conservation management plans, and succession planning, OAHP keeps farms in production, strengthens habitat and water resources, and helps farmers access the equity in their land without selling to developers.

Fully funding OAHP also leverages critical federal dollars at a 2:1 match through programs including the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This is a bipartisan investment in Oregon's future.

I urge you to fully fund OAHP through HB 5039 to ensure Oregon's working lands remain viable for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Trevor Beltz

Manager of Government Relations & Public Affairs

Tillamook County Creamery Association



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