

Dear Co-Chairs Helms, Owens, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

My name is Theresa Hausser and I live in Vida in Lane County. I urge you to support HB 2408 with the -1 amendment, funding the OSU Statewides at their current service level and expanding services in direct response to requests from OSU's constituents.

As a relatively new woodland owner whose woodland burned within 18 months of buying it, I could tick off dozens (if not hundreds) of bullet points laying out how my wife and I, and our woodland, have benefitted from OSU Extension and from the Forest Research Labs. Learning how to understand our woodland was challenging enough; figuring out how to reforest after a devastating fire while in the midst of severe weather events every year? Extension foresters are getting plenty of opportunity to translate research into comprehensible form for boots-on-the-ground practitioners like my wife and me and the many others affected by natural disasters. And at the same time, researchers are hearing from boots-on-the-ground people the challenges we're facing and the experiments we are living. All of this contributes to a healthier, more resilient Oregon.

I am sympathetic to concerns about federal money to Oregon drying up, and if that happens, where would money for the OSU statewides come from? Perhaps another way to frame that question is, what is the cost of cutting back on OSU programs? Cutting back on funding for the Statewides is a penny wise, pound foolish proposition. Sadly, there is data for that. Loss of personnel, and the concomitant reduction in service, have effects that are more exponential than linear. It takes years to regain the trust of communities after services disappear. The absence of skilled practitioners can give rise to a sense that skilled practitioners aren't necessary. When services are restored, the incoming personnel are not starting from scratch—they are fighting an uphill battle to gain the trust of people who have already been betrayed.

Please, please, please support HB 2408 with the -1 amendment. The OSU Statewides are too important to Oregon's health to trifle with.

Thank you for your consideration—and your support for the OSU Statewides.