

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens and committee members,

My name is Michelle Armstrong-Zielinski, today I am representing the Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries (AOHI), I have been in agriculture my entire life and currently work closely with Oregon State University in my Career and as the chair for AOHI. Today I fully support HB2408 and the -1 amendment, the Oregon Hazelnut industry is extremely important to Oregon Agriculture and relies on the college to remain successful. We utilize extension services and a large number of researchers. The biggest threat to the hazelnut industry is eastern filbert blight (EFB). It first showed up in the late 1960's and has been managed through fungicide applications and genetic improvements all this research has taken place at Oregon State University. While many growers were able to reduce or eliminate the fungicide applications because of the genetics what we have available for production trees is a single site resistance gene. In 2023 it was recognized that EFB has mutated here in the valley and the resistant varieties are no longer resistant to the multiple new strains of the disease that is present. Not only does EFB have multiple new strains it also appears to have a shorter life cycle than before going from 18 months to 6 months, this will increase the likelihood of having even more strains show up making EFB more of a challenge to control and creating a very serious threat to the industry. We are ahead of where we were in the 1960s as we do have registered fungicides and we do have some multisite genetic resistant trees in the pipeline, and this is all available because of OSU researchers. We are fortunate to have a good team there and while the industry does put a great deal of funding toward helping, we simply cannot afford all of the funding necessary for this to occur. Without continued research it is likely to increase fungicide applications and potentially increase chance of resistance to the fungicides since we are limited on what FRAC groups control EFB and even within those groups only a handful of active ingredients work on this disease. With the loss and threat of loss of many chemistries and the shortening of the life cycle of the disease we need more research than ever to help combat EFB.

I strongly urge you to support HB2408 with the -1 amendment.

Sincerely,

Michelle Armstrong-Zielinski