



March 17, 2025

Co Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2730.

The Oregon Seed Council is a trade organization that brings together seed farmers, marketers, brokers, researchers, and others involved in the Oregon seed industry from when the seed is planted to when the seed ultimately makes it to the hands of consumers. Through our membership, the Oregon Seed Council represents approximately 1,300 grass, legume, and specialty seed growers in Oregon, and our industry drives employment in many rural areas of the state, employing an estimated 10,000 Oregonians.

I am writing to express the Oregon Seed Council's strong support of HB 2730, which creates the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Incentive Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture. This program, through the -1 amendment provides a modest \$400,000 for scholarships. These scholarships would provide a significant impact for students pursuing agricultural education at one of Oregon's institutions of higher education for students who are enrolled in training programs aimed at preparing students to be farmers and ranchers.

The average age of a farmer in Oregon is 60, and while some families are able to keep the farm moving generationally, there are some who cannot. This program will help add a tool in the toolbox of identifying new farmers who have developed a passion for the industry and wish to be stewards of the land.

Costs associated with farming are rising, and so are tuition costs, but the next generation of agriculture needs support in covering these costs.

At a time when the industry is being hit with punitive regulations that make it difficult to start a business, let alone stay in business, this program will provide some relief to Oregonians who are passionate about agriculture and are preparing to develop their careers in the industry.

We urge you to support this important bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Chuinard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Chuinard
Executive Director
Oregon Seed Council