



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES

**Testimony before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
Senate Bill 576 - Relating to funding Japanese Beetle Eradication**

By Jeff Stone, Executive Director, Oregon Association of Nurseries

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Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, members of the committee, my name is Jeff Stone, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN). It is my pleasure to support Senate Bill 576 – which allocates \$2 million dollars from the General Fund to the State Department of Agriculture for the purpose of eradicating Japanese beetle grubs and adults. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Sen. Lew Frederick for introducing this bill on behalf of OAN.

Background on the Nursery and Greenhouse Industry

The nursery and greenhouse industry is the state’s largest agricultural sector, with over \$1.2 billion in sales across the nation and the globe. Nationally, Oregon ranks third in nursery production. **Traded Sector:** Nearly 80% of the nursery stock grown in our state leaves our borders – with over 50% reaching markets east of the Mississippi River. **By the numbers:** #1 in US: sales of conifers, shade trees, Christmas trees, and flowering trees. \$443.2 million in annual payroll - \$44,108 average annual pay. We send ecologically friendly, carbon sequestering, green products out of the state, and we bring traded sector dollars back to Oregon. **Who we are:** Nursery association members represent wholesale plant growers, Christmas tree growers, retailers, and greenhouse operators. Our members are located throughout the state, with our largest nursery growing operations found in Clackamas, Marion, Washington, Yamhill, and Multnomah Counties.

GRB eliminates funding, creates regulatory burden on nurseries

The Governor’s recommended budget did not include Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) funding for a Japanese Beetle (JB) insecticide treatment and trapping survey program. This is critical since JB continues to pose significant threat to the marketability, sustainability and outright regulation of Oregon’s agricultural products. A lot of success has been made to battle a pest that can feed on over 300 species of plants. According to the ODA, in 2017 the largest population of JB in Oregon was recorded at 23,480. Since that time ODA led JB eradication

efforts have reduced that down to 5467 trapped beetles in 2024. Of that total, 75% were caught at a single location. Treatment areas have also been significantly reduced from ~4,000 acres in 2020 to ~1,300 acres in 2024 in response to reduced JB populations.

After consulting with the ODA, we have grave concerns that all progress may all be in vain if the state does not continue trapping and treating the residual populations of JB in the Portland area. If your constituents have rose bushes, for example, their cost of insecticide treatments will fall completely to the public (and private business sector) going forward.

OAN has tapped its emergency fund to tide ODA over until SB 576 is enacted

The OAN works with both the ODA and the US Department of Agriculture – Animal Plant Health & Inspection Service (APHIS). This remains a concern at the federal level and the association, who met with senior staff at USDA-APHIS last week, has advised them that the nursery industry is seeking funding to maintain our status as a clean state. Since there was doubt, last year the OAN and the Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC) tapped emergency funds to keep the program running. OAN committed \$125,000 in emergency funds for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) efforts and agreed to move \$45K from EAB to JB and then added an additional 50K - bringing total JB contribution to \$95K by the nursery industry. OISC recognized the threat to Oregon and contributed \$510,000 to tide the ODA over until SB 576 is enacted. The funds granted by the OISC and OAN are providing programmatic support through the end of this biennium.

Oregon is a national leader on the prevention of pests and diseases

Oregon is a national leader for many agricultural commodities and its' JB free status allows our industries to export across the U.S. and to foreign markets without restrictions. ODA has stated "Under the U.S. Domestic JB Harmonization Plan, Oregon is considered 'JB-free' because of our comprehensive survey and treatment program, which has been supported through state funding. Without a statewide program, JB populations will again rise and spread throughout Oregon. Oregon's \$1.2 billion nursery industry will be directly impacted, as growers will be required to treat plants and take other safeguarding measures prior to shipment. Producers would be forced to treat prior to exporting, thereby applying more insecticides. This increases costs and negatively impacts local environment (e.g., water quality, secondary pest outbreaks, etc.)"

So, what does SB 576 do to prevent the spread of Japanese Beetle

Generally speaking, the \$2 million contemplated in SB 576 would go to supporting:

- Increased statewide trapping (over the past biennium ODA has reduced the number of traps as part of our surveillance program for JB due to diminishing funds. Summer 2025 will be at the lowest it has ever been).

- A return to treating any site with a single beetle caught. Over the past biennium ODA has been more selective on where we have treated, focusing on sites with two or more beetles are caught. Again, to save on costs.
- Program Staffing: (seasonal trappers and permanent staff): Maintain the JB Program Lead – this is limited duration position in place since 2017. This position is fully supported with JB funds and oversees mapping, trapping, and treatment efforts.
- Seasonal trapper numbers have been decreased, to save on costs. ODA believes that ideally program needs 4 dedicated seasonal staff.
- To fill (2) support positions to assist with field and program logistics and outreach. Both positions have been left vacant due to funding limitations.
- Passage of SB 576 finishes the job that the ODA and the OAN set out to do. Eradication of the Japanese Beetle to a level that makes the pest a non-regulatory issue.

Please support Senate Bill 576

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 576. This is a priority bill for the OAN and urges the committee to support this legislation. I appreciate your time and attention.