



Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

RE: Support of SB 576 - Funding for Japanese Beetle Eradication

March 18, 2025

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 576.

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 SB 576, which appropriates \$2,000,000 General Fund dollars for the purpose of eradicating Japanese Beetle grubs.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has supported eradication of the Japanese Beetle since 2017, following a major detection of the Japanese Beetle in Washington County in 2016. ODA program staff have identified the program work as incomplete and has noted that if the population spreads widely in the state, it could destroy over 300 types of plants, leading to more pesticide use to protect crops and gardens.

The establishment of the Japanese Beetle poses a significant threat to Oregon's urban landscapes and agricultural industries. This pest has a broad host range and damage potential - and not just to our crops and lawns, but if established here in Oregon, the Japanese Beetle could have a significant impact on Oregon's export market.

In 2022, Oregon grass seed was ranked fifth in agricultural commodities in Oregon, with an estimated \$639,100,000 production value for the year. The Oregon seed industry exports an estimated \$162,824,215 in grass, clover, and forage seeds to 56 countries. We are concerned about the potential impact the Japanese Beetle could have on our industry exports.

The threat of the Japanese beetle becoming established in Oregon cannot be overstated. The Japanese Beetle has the potential to deteriorate agricultural crops, gardens, public parks, and urban forests that are essential to Oregon's economy, landscape, and our communities.

The quarantine status and eradication programs for this pest are critical for keeping this beetle from establishing in Oregon.



By working proactively to eradicate the current population through the investment in SB 576, the state can rein in challenges associated with the destructive pest, including cost associated with managing the Japanese Beetle population, destruction of crops and property and addressing the impacts of defoliation events.

According to the ODA, “when plants are defoliated, they not only lose their leaves, but also the ability to photosynthesize. Without photosynthesis, essential ecosystem services such as purifying air, maintaining water quality along streams and rivers, and mitigating extreme temperatures (via shading) are affected. Wildlife habitats can be degraded and biodiversity may be affected.”¹

In turf and forage grasses, Japanese Beetle grubs can feed on roots for extended periods during fall and mild winter months. Grubs live in the soil and feed on grass roots. Pastures, natural grassy areas, golf courses, and lawns are particularly vulnerable. Grub feeding can result in severe root pruning that limits the plant's ability to acquire water and survive in drought-stress situations, often resulting in large dead patches of grass.

A proactive investment to eradicate this pest will help ODA's broader efforts to keep the Japanese Beetle out of our production systems, support a healthy environment, promote biodiversity in our ecosystem, and more maintain Oregon's reputation and opportunity in the export market.

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

¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/oda/Documents/Publications/IPPM/JBThreatAndOpportunity.pdf>