



Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources: Oregon Department of Agriculture’s 2025–2027 Budget Request

Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Oregon’s natural resource and agricultural coalition, we respectfully submit this letter in support of the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) 2025–27 budget request. ODA plays a vital role in sustaining the health, viability, and competitiveness of Oregon’s agricultural economy and rural communities.

We recognize the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) total funds request of \$189.2 million, including a General Fund request of \$40.3 million — as a modest reduction of approximately \$931,000 from the 2023–25 biennium.

Key Areas of Support:

- **Project OneODA Modernization:** This investment will deliver long-term benefits by creating a more efficient, streamlined, and accessible agency for the regulated community. This project is foundational to improving transparency, responsiveness, and overall customer service for all regulated sectors.
- **Continued Federal Partnership Programs:** Packages supporting Avian Influenza prevention, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and FSMA education are vital to Oregon’s preparedness, compliance, and agricultural competitiveness — both domestically and globally.
- **Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI):** Strengthening regional food systems and mid-supply-chain capacity is essential for ensuring food security and resilience, especially during market or supply chain disruptions.

Concerns and Considerations:

While we appreciate the Department’s careful budget reductions, we must express serious concern about the proposed elimination of the Predator Control Program, specifically the \$545,660 in General Fund support for USDA Wildlife Services. This program provides essential protection for livestock producers and rural communities. Shifting these costs to counties and private landowners could have disproportionate impacts on already resource-strained rural economies. We strongly urge the Legislature to explore avenues to retain some level of state support or transitional assistance.

We also have significant concerns regarding HB 2809, which proposes raising the pesticide product registration fee cap. Oregon already ranks among the top five states for pesticide registration fees — including California, which has a much larger regulatory framework and market scale. Before additional fee increases are considered, the state should evaluate how current revenues are being allocated and whether efficiencies or program adjustments could be achieved first. Specifically, we would like to see a return of 50% general fund support for the Pesticide Analytical and Response Center (PARC), and a reduction to the fee and general fund support for the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership based on significant concerns around program and data management.

Similarly, HB 2806 proposes increasing statutory fee caps for weights and measures by 30%, allowing two 10% fee hikes and continued annual adjustments up to 3%. While we understand the importance of maintaining reserves, we question the rationale for these fee increases when critical programs — such as housing, predator control, and compensation grants — are being phased out or defunded. The general fund should be funding more of these core programs to avoid burdening an already overburdened sector with increased fees.

Additional Program Phase-Outs of Concern:

We are also deeply concerned about the discontinuation of several one-time investments from the 2023–25 biennium, which provided critical support to producers, rural communities, and infrastructure development:

- \$5.5 million – Agricultural Workforce Housing (HB 2001, 2023)
- \$1 million – Wolf Depredation Compensation Grants
- \$9 million – Meat Infrastructure Grants (HB 3410, 2023)
- \$1.2 million – Vine Mealybug and Invasive Species Management
- \$980,000 – Japanese Beetle Eradication Efforts

The removal of these targeted investments undermines progress made in previous biennia and creates uncertainty for long-term program planning and community resilience. Removing these investments now, particularly for pest and invasive species management efforts, will likely cost Oregonians much more over the longer term.

Finally, the proposed elimination of the Economic Development Policy and Operations Specialist position further reduces the state’s capacity to support agricultural trade and market development. At a time when Oregon agriculture is increasingly dependent on global markets, the ability to compete internationally is not just a return on investment — it is a strategic Imperative.

Conclusion:

Oregon’s agriculture, food, and natural resource sectors depend on the strength, stability, and modernization of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The 2025–27 budget reflects a

thoughtful balance and positions the agency to continue delivering critical services statewide.

We urge your support for ODA's core budget proposals and the continuation of key federal partnerships. Additionally, we ask the Legislature to reconsider reductions to vital programs that directly impact working lands, rural communities, and the future resilience of Oregon agriculture.

Thank you for your leadership and ongoing support of Oregon's agricultural and natural resources economies.

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