

Submitter: Norah Pratton
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

I am a certified Oregon State University Master Gardener tm volunteer (since 2008) who strongly supports the proposed OSU Statewide Public Service Programs funding (OSU Statewides) requested in HB 2408 to continue OSU Statewides' mission for a resilient and prosperous future for ALL Oregonians.

The OSU Extension Service is one of three statewide public service programs. It engages and teaches people, families, businesses, and communities to help solve problems, manage resources, and develop leadership in both rural and urban areas.

In HB 2408, the OSU Statewides request a total of \$207.2M which includes a funding increase of \$17.5M for full continued service level funding to sustain core mission programs and services as well as \$6M in new funding to build capacity to bolster and expand programming in critical areas across OSU Extension, Agriculture Experiment Stations and the Forest Research Lab.

Without full continued service level funding essential OSU Extension services, staff and programs will falter and have a long-lasting and long-reaching impact on the progress already achieved in creating research-based knowledge and delivering evidence-based programs that strengthen communities and economies, sustain natural resources and promote healthy families and individuals. Shortfalls in previous years' state funding to the OSU Statewides have negatively impacted too many critical areas across Oregon's communities, farms, food systems and natural resources. If the OSU Statewides are not fully funded as requested -- a total of \$207.2M -- there will be even more serious shortfalls and cuts from which some programs may not be able to completely recover.

As an OSU Extension Master Gardener trained volunteer for 17 years (and an Oregon Public School teacher for 35 years before that), I have seen the effects of underfunding the continuing service levels and strongly urge you to SUPPORT HB 2408 and recognize the ongoing, essential services provided by the OSU Statewides to Oregonians for over a century. The state's investment in the OSU Statewides will help ensure that OSU can continue to provide the practical research and faculty expertise that we, as volunteers, rely on to serve our communities.

With the Trump administration continuously targeting programs and services that lift people up, picking on Oregon as a blue state for personal revenge, and failing to consider the importance of farming, research, service, food insecurity, and self-

reliance, it seems more important than ever to PRESERVE the Oregon state systems we love. It feels like a fight, and we are up for it. With your SUPPORT of HB 2408, the OSU Statewides will be well-positioned to tackle these issues head-on, fostering a more resilient and prosperous future for all residents of Oregon.

Norah Pratton, Hermiston, Umatilla County, Oregon