



25 April 2013

Honorable Members of the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources;

The organizations below are writing you today to express our **support** for the expansion of the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) program. This expansion is contained in Policy Option Package #320 within the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) budgets. We are all concerned about unsafe pesticide concentrations in water, and believe that PSPs are a model way to deal with watersheds that are found to have pesticides present above the established benchmarks.

The Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program was established in 2000 as a joint venture between ODA and DEQ to address watersheds where water quality monitoring showed levels of “pesticides of concern” that were above established benchmarks. But, instead of trying a regulatory approach to force changes to local landowner’s practices, they decided to take a different tact and work along with local stakeholders to address the problem. PSPs use Oregon State University Extension, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and local expertise to educate landowners on voluntary practices that could help alleviate the problem and monitor the progress. This approach has proven successful in several watersheds, most notably the Hood River.

Our collective organizations support a budget of \$1.5 million for the program over the next biennium-- half of which will be from the general fund and half from pesticide registration fees. The pesticide program will be able to fund that without raising registration fees over the next biennium, but fees may need to be raised if the program continues under this model into the future. **We are supportive of raising the pesticide fees in the future to fund this program, only if the 50/50 split between general fund and pesticide fees remains in place.**

Please support the Policy Option Package #320 to expand the PSP program in Oregon. PSPs have shown that volunteer efforts, which give landowners flexibility, can achieve water quality goals without adding new burdensome regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.

- Agricultural Cooperative Council of Oregon
- Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers
- Oregon Association of Nurseries
- Oregon Blueberry Commission
- Oregon Christmas Tree Association
- Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
- Oregon Essential Oil Growers League
- Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
- Oregon Seed Council
- Oregon Small Woodlands Association
- Oregon Water Resources Congress
- Oregon Wheat Growers League
- Oregonians for Food & Shelter