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## COUNTY COURT

TERRY K. TALLMAN, Judge  
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Boardman, Oregon  
LEANN REA, Commissioner  
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Heppner, Oregon  
KEN GRIEB, Commissioner  
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Heppner, Oregon

January 23, 2013

State of Oregon Senators  
State of Oregon Representatives  
Salem, OR

Dear Legislators,

It has come to our attention that the Oregon Department of Agriculture is in the midst of making some very tough decisions regarding the State's Noxious Weed Control Program. We understand that the Governor's proposed budget calls for a \$500,000 cut to the Noxious Weed Control Program budget which equates to the loss of three (3) jobs. Two (2) of these jobs, one (1) in Union and one (1) in Redmond, are proposed to be lost through retirement and the other through an outright cut of the Grant Program Coordinator position.

Budget cuts such as these will have a very detrimental effect on an already strained program that works to protect the natural resources of the State. Great strides have been made to educate the public on the dangers and economic impacts that noxious weeds have upon the environment and agricultural economy. Success stories regarding noxious weed biological control projects are numerous and important and support the reduction of pesticides used to control noxious weeds in Oregon. The proposed cuts will have a great impact on the Department's ability to support and network with County Weed Control Programs and especially those in the eastern part of the state. The ability for early detection and rapid response to new invasive weed threats, such as purple starthistle that has the potential to make a \$12 million a year negative impact to the State's economy, will be greatly reduced.

Katy Coba, ODA Director, recently stated that all Natural Resource agency budgets combined make up 1% of the State budget while at the same time agriculture provides for 30% of the gross product of the State. Agriculture is very important to the economy of the State and the protection of its natural resources is vital to sustain its future.

Morrow County supports its noxious weed control program and further supports the Oregon Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Program and the support they provide us in protecting and preserving the State's valuable natural resources. We ask that you also support the State's Agriculture and Natural Resources and help to find a way to sustain the ODA Noxious Weed Program at its current level of funding.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Terry Tallman in blue ink.  
Terry Tallman  
Judge

Handwritten signature of Ken Grieb in blue ink.  
Ken Grieb  
Commissioner

Handwritten signature of Leann Rea in blue ink.  
Leann Rea  
Commissioner