



Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association

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February 25, 2013

The Honorable Chris Edwards and Ben Unger, Co-Chairs
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, 453
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for Oregon Department of Agriculture Budgets

Dear Senator Edwards and Representative Unger:

I'm writing today in support of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and their proposed budget for the next biennium. Without the help of the ODA the Oregon Christmas tree industry would very likely be a fraction of the size it is today.

Export markets like Mexico have tried to shut the door to Oregon-produced Christmas trees; however, thanks to the ODA's trade and phytosanitary disease experts these markets remain open. Oregon Christmas tree producers export more than 20 percent of their harvested trees to Mexico and the loss of this market would obviously be devastating to this industry.

The balance of government status and technical expertise is what has kept this market open; these are valuable traits that have kept the government-to-government dialogue open and moving in a positive direction. There are no other resources or mechanisms to recreate what the ODA can bring to these very sensitive and highly political situations.

Even within the United States pest and disease issues can stop trade. Our ability to certify agricultural products as being free of pests and disease is absolutely critical to keep both domestic and foreign trade moving.

Oregon is the largest Christmas tree producing area in the World and without the Oregon Department of Agriculture that would very likely not be the case.

We encourage your support to their proposed budgets and the continuation of their valuable service to Oregon.

Sincerely,

Bruce Wiseman,
President