

Testimony by Dr. Leslie Hudson of Bend Oregon for The Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: ODA Budget Submission 2013-15 and proposed elimination of all State-funded conservation
of Oregon's Native Plants (Policy Package 330)

February 28, 2013

The Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: Elimination of All State Funding for Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Native
Plants in Oregon

Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Ways & Means Committee

For the record, I am Dr. Leslie Hudson and recently moved to Bend Oregon from the east coast. I was previously Vice Provost of the University of Pennsylvania and so well aware of that State's plant conservation efforts through the work of the Morris Arboretum. Unlike Oregon, however, the East Coast has little left to conserve and so their efforts are in the hugely more challenging realm of restoration. Oregon is a unique State with a myriad of unique natural habitats – from the coast to the high desert - which are home to native plants, some of which have not been recorded anywhere else in the world.

I was shocked to read that - if the explicit aim of Policy Package 330 (ODA 2013-15 Budget Submission) is enacted by Legislative Agreement - "all State-supported conservation work on Oregon's threatened and endangered native plant species will cease."

The viability of our native plant communities is a fundamental measure of the health of Oregon's environment. We have a significant list of threatened and endangered native plant species, some of which have not been recorded outside of Oregon – for example Peck's Milk-vetch - thus a complete cut in funding by the Department of Agriculture will send forth the message that "ODA gives a very low priority to native plant conservation and does not actively support the efforts of Oregon's Citizens to Keep Oregon Green."

ODA has stated that it hopes to secure competitive financial grants to maintain a *barebones* conservation program. I have served on several national and international grant-giving bodies. Invariably these bodies look very closely at matching funds as they make their funding decisions. The absence of State Funds for a State Program in a State Agency will be viewed as evidence that "Oregon is not prepared to support its own legislative mandate for plant conservation." Our competitiveness for external funds will be critically damaged. Ultimately, this decline might impact ODA's legal structure to receive Section 6 funds for plant conservation under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

I wish to record my strong opposition to the proposal by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (Policy Package 330 in ODA Budget Submission for 2013-15) to cut all State funding for conservation of Oregon's threatened and endangered native plant species with the unrealistic aim of replacing these monies by external grant funding.

As a concerned Oregon Citizen, I ask that you act to preserve this inexpensive but critical State program through the provision of sufficient funds. Your Action will reap immediate dividends as it will maintain the competitiveness of the Native Plants Program in raising additional external grant monies.

Sincerely,

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