



**Testimony before the House Committee on Revenue
Respectfully Submitted by Jana Jarvis
On behalf of the Oregon Wheat Growers League
February 20, 2014**

Chair Barnhart and Members of the Committee:

RE: SB 1541

The Oregon Wheat Growers League (OWGL) is a non-profit trade association representing over 1400 wheat and barley producers across the state of Oregon. Although commonly thought of as an eastern Oregon crop, wheat is currently produced in twenty-two of Oregon's thirty-six counties.

Wheat producers have long supported efforts to address hunger in Oregon. The Bushels for Betsy program established by OWGL in 1997 has focused on raising financial contributions from members to cover some of the costs of processing wheat into pancake mix that is distributed by the Oregon Food Bank. Many of our members also participate in the Farmers Ending Hunger program that accepts donations of Oregon crops and works with food manufacturers to process these crops for distribution to the Food Bank. However, the processing facilities that manufacture pancake mix have the benefit of federal tax credits to offset their costs. Growers are largely unable to receive these federal tax benefits so there is a need to create a mechanism at the state level to encourage grower participation. SB 1541 is that solution.

Wheat has long been considered a necessary component of an individual's daily nutritional needs. Wheat producers in Oregon are committed to addressing the state's hunger crisis but need the help of SB 1541 to offset their costs of participation. The input costs for growing wheat are costly and combined with the costs of harvesting and transportation may prevent many growers from participating in this program. In that the Oregon Food Bank is focusing on increasing grower donations, the fifteen percent tax credit proposed in SB 1541 should serve as a starting point in this discussion as the effectiveness of this rate is evaluated. Most importantly, however, is the recognition that this partnership with the state in SB 1541 will go a long way toward solving Oregon's hunger crisis.

The Oregon Wheat Growers League, and their 1400 producers across the state of Oregon, asks for your support of SB 1541.