



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

February 26, 2015

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Committee  
[WaysandMeans.NaturalResourcesSub@state.or.us](mailto:WaysandMeans.NaturalResourcesSub@state.or.us)

Re: HB 5002, Dept. of Agriculture Budget – Comments

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has strong positions related to protecting agricultural lands, to assuring abundant clean water for all, assuring our public facilities are not damaged by invasive species (which would cost us all millions) and that government has the responsibility for public safety.

Director Coba reminded a recent legislative committee that we won't have enough agriculture land worldwide to feed the expected 9 billion world population by 2050. The League works to preserve Oregon's valuable farmland—not only in the Willamette Valley, but all over Oregon. The agriculture land in Eastern Oregon is as important to Oregon agriculture as is the Willamette Valley, Southern Oregon and the rest of Oregon. Oregonians can proudly point to the fact we “saved” lands that now supply the world with exceptional quality wines, for instance.

Industrial agriculture is about 15% of Oregon's economy. It is the most stable of our industries with diversified crops and products that have weathered economic ups and downs.

With that background, the League would like to provide the following input as you consider the Department of Agriculture's budget:


- We support POP #310 related to strengthening the program to help the agricultural community as it addresses Water Quality. As we are experiencing a changing climate with less snowpack and even, at this point, less moisture for our rivers and streams, it is important that we address the fact that “the solution to pollution is dilution” is no longer a realistic proposition. A basic conclusion of the work of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy was that, above all, we need good data in order to move forward with solutions to the need for abundant clean water for all. This package continues collecting data, but finally begins putting resources in actually doing work on the ground. You saw the report on KPMs 12a and 12b. Those graphs are not going in the right direction. We must see results or we need to consider if we need to consider alternatives to this voluntary program.

- We support POP #320 to provide additional funds for the Invasive Species Council. Curbing invasive species is a very real economic issue for both private business and public entities.
- In 2013 we supported additional staffing in other natural resource agencies due to the increased expectation that they participate in the Regional Solutions program. Therefore, we can support POP #410: However, we note that, in 2013, they were awarded another staffer directly related to water supply issues related to agriculture. Therefore, this position might require a second look as you address the variety of needs for natural resource programs.

We **DO NOT SUPPORT** Package 450 (linked to SB 201 which we also oppose). We believe that these "alignment coordinator" positions are just another layer of government even beyond the demanding Regional Solutions program. Agencies today work together on economic issues. You saw that demonstrated during Director Coba's presentation this week. This additional layer of personnel is unnecessary. State monies instead should be used to allow natural resource agencies to accomplish their missions.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

  
Robin Wisdom  
President

  
Peggy Lynch  
Natural Resources Coordinator

cc: Department of Agriculture Director Katy Coba ([katy.coba@state.or.us](mailto:katy.coba@state.or.us))  
Richard Whitman, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Advisor ([Richard.whitman@state.or.us](mailto:Richard.whitman@state.or.us))