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February 25, 2015

Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court St NE Room H-178
Salem, OR 97301

RE: The 2015/2016 Oregon Department of Agriculture Budget

Dear Sirs,

The Oregon Grass Seed Bargaining Association wishes to offer our wholehearted support to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and continuing budget authorization.

The Oregon grass seed industry produces roughly 60% of the worldwide supply of cool season varieties of grass seed. Grass seed is a specialty crop and as such it is not a publicly traded commodity. In the past this resulted in very volatile pricing year to year with farmers often selling their crop at prices below the cost of production.

A number of years ago the ODA began a program of supervised price negotiations to set the price of grass seed each year. This process has increasingly been embraced by both growers and seed dealers and has become an invaluable tool for the seed industry. It has helped maintain grower prices at profitable levels bringing millions of dollars into the Oregon economy each year.

The ODA staff are talented, knowledgeable and capable and we greatly appreciate and in fact depend on their assistance and support.

Please lend your support to their budget.

Thank you very much,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Simmons", is written over the typed name.

Mark Simmons
Executive Director
Oregon Grass Seed Bargaining Association.