

February 24, 2015

**Testimony in support of HB 2183**  
**House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Chair Witt and members of the committee,

I write in support of HB 2183, requiring a person growing *Arundo donax* L. for commercial purposes to file bond with the Invasive Species Council.

My name is Kevin Weitemier and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Botany & Plant Pathology at Oregon State University. I am also a director-at-large with the Native Plant Society of Oregon, a non-profit citizens group of nearly 1,000 members in 13 chapters statewide.

The planting of *Arundo donax* in Oregon poses a grave threat to the state through its very high likelihood of escaping cultivation and catastrophically invading Oregon's natural ecosystems. Two recent studies of the physiology of *A. donax* conclude that this plant can grow well in Oregon and likely poses a threat of invasion:

“These findings suggest that it is unlikely *A. donax* will be constrained by the agricultural setting, and therefore cultivating it will disperse it to new environments and will likely lead to future invasions.”  
(Nackley, 2012)

“The data presented [here] indicates that *A. donax* thrives in the Columbia River basin agricultural area, but that it also produces significantly greater amounts of VOCs [volatile organic compounds] than previously published literature suggests.” (Maxfield, 2014)

*Arundo donax* is extremely aggressive. In areas where it has become established it forms monocultures that exclude native plants and animals, clogs stream channels, and uses large amounts of water that otherwise would remain in streams.

The Native Plant Society of Oregon argues that the risk assessment performed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture dramatically understates the risks posed by this plant (Sanders and Robinson, 2012). Under current rules, any entity can plant industrial scale plots of *A. donax*. Once *Arundo* is planted on a large scale the risk of its escaping is almost a certainty, burdening future Oregonians with the cost of attempting to control the outbreak, and inevitably leading to certain areas being sacrificed to the plant while efforts are focused on the most sensitive areas.

This bill will discourage the planting of *Arundo donax* in Oregon, and if it is planted, provides the Invasive Species Council with at least some funds to begin the work of control if (when) the plant escapes.

Don't let *Arundo donax* become Oregon's next English ivy, Himalayan blackberry, or yellow star thistle. HB 2183 is the only way the potential invasion of *A. donax* can be prevented, and I respectfully urge a “Yes” vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important matter.

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References:

Maxfield, Jason C. (2014). Agricultural management decisions impact isoprene emission and physiology of *Arundo donax*, and emerging bioenergy crop. Masters thesis. Portland State University. Portland, OR. Paper 1642. [http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open\\_access\\_etds/1642/](http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/1642/)

Nackley, Lloyd L. (2012). Ecophysiology as a tool for evaluating invasive-plant based bioenergies: physiological and ecological case-studies of *Arundo donax* and *Elaeagnus angustifolia*. PhD dissertation. University of Washington. Seattle, WA. <http://hdl.handle.net/1773/21977>

Sanders, Judi, & Robinson, Billy D. (2012). Comments on ODA's proposed rule establishing a statewide control are for *Arundo donax*. Native Plant Society of Oregon. Accessed February 22, 2015. <http://npsoregon.org/arundo/NPSOonArundodonax.pdf>