



East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
5211 N. Williams Ave., Portland OR 97217

March 31, 2017

Representative Brian Clem, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, Room 347
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for House Bill 3249

Dear Chair Clem and Committee Members:

The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) would like to express our support for HB 3249, known as the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP). OAHP will provide a new set of tools for landowners in Oregon to support working farms and ranches while also providing incentives and support for conservation benefits on those lands. Oregon continues to face pressure on its rural land from low-density development, fragmentation, population growth, succession challenges, and other factors. In response, EMSWCD sees OAHP as providing critical voluntary tools to help landowners, land trusts, and like-minded agencies (such as soil and water conservation districts) meet Oregon's natural resource goals.

OAHP will fulfill a much-needed funding niche by providing grants to land trusts and other eligible entities to protect agricultural land. Unlike our neighbors in Washington and California, Oregon lacks a farmland protection program that could leverage other funding programs, like the USDA Farm Bill's Agricultural Land Easement Program.

OAHP will also assist landowners with succession planning, fund a study to determine implications of Oregon's tax structure on succession planning, and provide support for managing conservation values on private land through management plans.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this letter in support of HB 3249.

Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

Jay Udelhoven, Executive Director

cc: Committee members