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April 3, 2017

Dear Committee,

On behalf of Cascade Pacific RC&D, I am writing to express our support for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program/House Bill 3249.

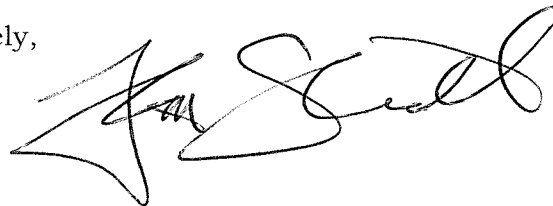
Sustaining Oregon's productive and well-stewarded agricultural lands is a high priority for our organization and partners. The strategies and tools proposed in HB 3249 represent effective, low-cost, and much-needed interventions to ensure that Oregon farmers and ranchers have available options to maintain and preserve their agricultural operations.

Trends leading to the loss of productive farmland are significant and accelerating, making HB 3249 a timely concern for our stakeholders and our state. Cascade Pacific maintains multiple programs aimed at enhancing the viability of farms and local food economies: preserving agricultural land is at the heart of such efforts.

The diverse stakeholder organizations which comprise the OAHP working group represent a promising collaborative of agricultural interests and natural resource conservation organizations. Formalizing this group into the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission would be a great step forward in recognizing the important of dialogue and collaboration between agriculture, natural resources, tribes, and the public sector.

I encourage you to give HB 3249 your full and careful consideration.

Sincerely,



KIRK SHIMEALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR