

NORTHWEST RANGELAND TRUST

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April 3, 2017

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

RE: Support for House Bill 3249

Dear Chair Clem and Committee Members,

I'm writing to testify in support of HB 3249, known as the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program. The mission of the Northwest Rangeland Trust is to help Oregon, Washington, and Idaho ranch and farm landowners protect and preserve the long-term viability of their ecologically significant private lands.

The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) would fulfill a much-needed funding source by providing grants to land trusts and other eligible entities to protect agricultural land. Currently, in the state of Oregon, unlike Washington and California, we lack a farm protection program that we can use to access the Federal Funds that are available through NRCS programs like Agricultural Land Easement Program (ALE).

The program would 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 your consideration.

Respectfully,



Frank J. O'Leary,
Executive Director
Northwest Rangeland Trust

CC: Representative Susan McLain
Representative Sherrie Sprenger
Representative Greg Barreto
Representative Sal Esquivel
Representative Caddy McKeown
Representative Karin Power