



April 3, 2017

Representative Brian Clem, Chair
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,

On behalf of the Board and staff of McKenzie River Trust, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of HB 3249, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program. In the 25 years I have worked in land and water conservation in Oregon and other parts of the West, we've seen great things come from collaborations when trust was established among farm and ranchland owners, conservation group members, and agency partners. Having a program in Oregon dedicated to such efforts will ensure greater resiliency for rural ecologies and economies.

Oregon has had its share of attention over the last year for disagreements about the management of public and private lands. The Malheur Refuge occupation in 2016 stressed that community and the region tremendously. But the community held together based in part on many years of trust-building and field work among people integrating production agriculture and habitat conservation. The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program will provide the needed base to help landowning families consider their options for succession planning, diversify income streams with habitat conservation projects, and continue to steward the clean water, habitat, recreation and other public values that farm and ranchland provides.

Oregon offers a national model for collaboration in many areas. Let's build on that legacy with a program dedicated to trusting relationships and meaningful projects on good ground. The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program will help do that. I encourage your strong support for its passage and implementation.

Thanks much for the good work you do in Salem and throughout Oregon.

Sincerely,

Joe Moll
Executive Director