



February 3, 2017

Members of the Oregon State Senate
Members of the Oregon House of Representatives
Salem, Oregon

Dear Legislators,

I am writing on behalf of the 4-County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), a consortium of agencies, non-profit groups and individuals from Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah and Washington counties. The CWMA works to prevent the introduction and control the spread of harmful invasive plants in our region by facilitating cooperative management among land managers. We accomplish our work by information sharing and relationship building, inventorying and assessing weeds, and conducting outreach to raise awareness about weeds among the wider public.

Our CWMA supports House Bill 2043, an emergency funding bill for the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Weed Control program. The Weed Control program is not merely instrumental in the fight against invasive plants in Oregon; it is the pivot on which all other local programs turn. ODA staff works on the worst species across the state: kudzu and giant hogweed in the north, Taurian & distaff thistle in the south, and hoary Alyssum in the east. But as resources have decreased over recent years, so has their coverage.

Make no mistake, the program has done a remarkable job working with partners and stretching to cover its obligations. The CWMA is concerned that current cost-cutting projections will leave watershed councils, cities, counties, soil & water conservation districts and cooperative weed management areas exposed to threats that ODA would ordinarily manage. In the world of invasives, where political boundaries are meaningless, failure to fund the Weed Control program imposes a substantial burden on local jurisdictions and non-profits, many of which are already strapped for funds.

We hope the committee agrees that continued investment in the Weed Control program is not only money well-spent now, but also a good deal more money not spent in the future. We thank you for the opportunity to comment and urge you to vote in favor of HB 2043.

Sincerely,

Elaine Stewart

Elaine M. Stewart
Senior Natural Resources Scientist, Metro – Conservation Program
Chair, 4-County CWMA Steering Committee