



OREGON
ASSOCIATION OF
NURSERIES



**Our Coalition SUPPORTS Full Funding of the
Oregon Department of Agriculture's Strategic Implementation Area POP**

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to express our support for the full funding of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) Policy Option Package #303. ODA's Strategic Implementation Area program funds a basin-by-basin approach to assessing compliance with Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Act and funding incentive-based water quality work to move toward meeting Oregon's water quality goals. Since its inception, the program has helped the state and stakeholders understand and promote compliance with Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Act and provides a clear path for assessing agricultural water quality in the basins covered by the program.

The Oregon Agricultural Water Quality Management Act was adopted in 1993, and has served as the primary vehicle for regulating agricultural water quality from its inception. The program is housed within the Oregon Department of Agriculture, allowing the agency with agricultural expertise to work with agricultural landowners to achieve the state's water quality goals. Recognizing that ODA needed to show results and strategically focus on areas with the greatest needs, ODA added SIAs to their overall water quality program in 2013. The SIAs focus ODA's work and include a pre-evaluation, outreach, technical assistance, on-the-ground projects, enforcement if necessary, and a post-evaluation. At the conclusion of the process, ODA and its partners can tell the story of how agriculture is acting to protect water quality and correct problems that may exist. However, in order to approach the work at the scale needed to cover key basins, the agency needs additional investment in SIAs.

In its agency request budget, ODA had requested \$1.7 million to expand on their existing work. However, the Governor's recommended budget only provided \$463,609 for the program. Our coalition strongly supports funding the full agency request of \$1.7 million. With an increasing focus on water quality around the state, this program is critical to enabling the stakeholders to ensure that the state's agricultural water quality program is meeting its goals and to promote additional investment in dealing with "legacy conditions" and other water quality issues key basins statewide. This work is supported by both the agricultural and environmental communities, and full funding of

this POP will better enable both sides to understand and reach agreement on our progress in meeting agricultural water quality goals.

We strongly encourage your support of POP #303 in the original amount requested by the agency, \$1.7 million.

Thank you for your consideration.

Oregon Farm Bureau
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Trout Unlimited
Oregon Water Resources Congress
Oregon Wheatgrowers League
Oregon Seed Council
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregonians for Food and Shelter
Oregon Women for Agriculture

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