

LANDS IN TRUST PROTECTED FOREVER



February 11, 2019

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Oregon State Legislature, House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use

Re: HB 2729

Dear Chair Clem, Vice-Chairs McLain and Post, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Deschutes Land Trust, I'm writing to express our strongest possible support for HB 2729. Funding the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) at \$10M for the 2019-2021 biennium will provide a critical set of tools to support farmers and ranchers in communities throughout Oregon.

The need for OAHP is indisputable. A great many of our legacy ranches and farms are at risk of conversion from residential development pressures, the aging of our agricultural producers and the high cost for young farmers and ranchers seeking to enter the business. The subdivision of our productive farms and ranches threatens local economies, agricultural production and a fragmentation of critically important wildlife habitat and migration corridors. OAHP represents an important tool that can provide multiple economic, social and ecological benefits for Oregon.

OAHP was the product of a remarkable collaboration between agricultural producers and conservation organizations, a collaboration that successfully overcame longstanding suspicions and distrust. As a result, in 2017 OAHP found bi-partisan legislative support and encouragement with a mandate to move to rulemaking. Now is the time for the Oregon Legislature to formally launch this important program by funding the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program with a \$10 Million appropriation for the coming biennium. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,


Brad Chalfant
Executive Director