



February 12, 2019

Oregon State Legislature, House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use

RE: Support for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (HB 2729)

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

On behalf of the Board and staff of the McKenzie River Trust, I encourage your strong support for HB 2729, providing initial funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP). Since the enabling legislation was passed in the previous regular session, dozens of citizens from across Oregon have worked together to create the means of implementing the program. With the \$10 million requested under HB 2729, Oregon's farmers and ranchers will find increased opportunities for land and water conservation in ways that secure agriculture production, clean water, and fish and wildlife habitat.

At a time when the cultural differences between urban and rural areas are increasingly politicized and skewed, implementation of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program will offer a counterpoint. Oregonians express a strong desire for food and fiber produced close to home. We also value fish, wildlife, clean water, and natural areas. The planning efforts and conservation agreements under OAHP will demonstrate a commitment to that wide range of benefits. When used as match for much larger federal agriculture programs, OAHP dollars will generate significant net income for Oregon's farmers and ranchers. The multiplier effect of the investment proposed in HB 2729 will be significant in real dollars and in good will throughout the state.

We recognize that the immediate calls on general fund dollars exceed those that are available. We appreciate the careful thought you give to making decisions about how to make the most of those limited opportunities. We hope that you will agree that funding the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program under HB 2729 will provide both immediate and long-term benefit to the people, fish, and wildlife of Oregon.

Best wishes,

Joe Moll
Executive Director

Protecting Special Lands

120 Shelton McMurphey Blvd, Suite 270 • Eugene, OR 97401 • phone (541) 345-2799 • fax (541) 465-3876
• mrt@mckenzieriver.org www.mckenzieriver.org