

ANALYSIS

Item 43: Department of Agriculture Grasshopper and Cricket Suppression

Analyst: John Terpening

Request: Allocate \$1,192,241 from the Emergency Fund for the cost-share program related to grasshopper and cricket suppression.

Analysis: During the second special session of 2021, SB 5561 provided the Department of Agriculture (ODA) \$5 million total funds to initiate efforts to suppress grasshopper and cricket outbreaks impacting farmers across Oregon due to drought conditions. Of the funds provided, \$3,807,759 General Fund was designated for a cost-share program allowing private landowners to get financial assistance from the Department for the expense of treatment application to suppress grasshopper and cricket populations. The cost-share program has just recently come online, with reimbursement forms from participants needing to be submitted by August 1. Applicants can be reimbursed for up to 75% of the actual cost of treatment under the program.

ODA reports that the target acreage for the 75% cost share program is between 750,000 and 1 million acres and initial estimates put treatment costs at around \$5-7 per acre. However, treatment costs have increased to an estimated \$7-10 per acre. In order to be able to encourage participation, treat the same target acreage amount, and maintain the 75% cost share, ODA is requesting an additional \$1,192,241 General Fund for this program, which would bring the total available for the program to \$5 million.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board allocate \$1,192,241 General Fund from the special purpose appropriation made to the Emergency Board for the state's natural disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities to the Department of Agriculture for efforts and activities related to drought.

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Oregon Department of Agriculture
Klein

Request: Allocate \$1,192,241 from the State Emergency Fund for the grasshopper and cricket cost-share program implemented in Senate Bill 5561 (2021 2nd Special Session).

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: During the 2021 2nd Special Session, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) received \$5.0 million in funding in Senate Bill 5561 to aid in suppressing grasshopper and cricket outbreaks impacting the agricultural industry in Oregon due to drought conditions. This funding included \$4.0 million General Fund and \$1.0 million Measure 76 Lottery Funds. Due to the continued drought conditions, the grasshopper and cricket populations are expected to continue to grow. In 2015, it was estimated there were 2.5 million acres of economically infested land. The 2021 survey indicated there are 10.2 million acres of economically infested land.

The Department is requesting the additional \$1.2 million in General Fund to provide additional funding to the landowner cost-share program. This program allows private landowners to receive financial assistance from ODA for treatment expenses.

Legal Reference: Allocation of \$1,192,241 from the State Emergency Fund to supplement the appropriation made by chapter 4, section 7 Oregon Laws 2021, Second Special Session, for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, grasshopper and cricket suppression efforts for the 2021-23 biennium.



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May 2, 2022

Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) requests permission to appear before the June meeting of the Emergency Board to increase the funding for the Grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression activities.

During the 2021 2nd Special Session, SB 5561 appropriated \$5 million to ODA to initiate efforts to suppress grasshopper and cricket outbreaks impacting farmers across Oregon due to drought conditions. The one-time funding included \$1 million Measure 76 Lottery Funds for survey work and developing treatment plans and \$4 million General Fund. Of the General Fund, \$3,807,759 was for the grasshopper and cricket cost-share program, that allows private landowners to get financial assistance for the expense of suppression treatments. ODA respectfully requests an additional \$1,192,241 General Fund. This request would bring the total cost-share to \$5 million and would increase the amount available for landowner cost-share.

Agency Action/Background

The grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations in Oregon are endemic and will continue to be an ongoing pest. Grasshopper eggs are laid underground and are resistant to freezing over winter but can be attacked by fungus and disease organisms in warm winters. Dry conditions in the springtime favor grasshopper populations because fewer nymphs die of natural causes. Drought conditions in the summer encourages grasshoppers to move in search of forage. With climate change, predicted dryer climate, and prolonged droughts, the level of economically infested acreage will continue to rise. Since 2015, outbreak levels of grasshoppers have been steadily rising, and current numbers surpass outbreak levels from

the 80's and 90's. In 2015 there were 2.5 million acres of economic levels of grasshoppers, in 2021 there are 10.15 million acres of economically infested acres with grasshoppers.

The Department maintains a base survey and detection program for many invasive pests, including grasshoppers, *Lymantria dispar* (formerly Gypsy moth), and Japanese beetles, which is funded, in part, by federal funds and in parts by state funds. The Grasshopper and Mormon cricket (hereafter, referred to collectively as grasshopper) program in 2021 was funded at \$92,687 by federal funds and \$83,417 by state funds. These funds covered the cost of one full time Natural Resource Specialist 3 Entomologist/ Survey Coordinator and two and a half part time seasonal laborer positions.

The Department has been cooperating with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) for several decades to conduct surveys for grasshoppers. These surveys are used to determine whether control measures are advisable to prevent economic levels of damage to rangelands, croplands or to protect wildlife resources.

ODA works with stakeholders to share survey results and provide suppression suggestions and timelines. A very successful example of this collaboration was the Mormon cricket outbreak that began with several bands overrunning Arlington. ODA helped facilitate formation of a local response group to execute local detection and control, ODA also supplied the Arlington contingent with delimitation survey, needed information on the cricket's biology, as well as connected them with interstate collaborators and supplies. This effort coordinated personnel from ODA, Gilliam County, City Officials, residents, local producers, and OSU Extension.

As part of the agreement with USDA-APHIS-PPQ, ODA also assists with Oregon suppression activities contracted through USDA. During this time frame, we must pull survey scouts from the field to assist with suppression treatments. This means there are fewer scouts available to survey and respond to reports of egg hatch or grasshopper damage, thus lower support to help stakeholders with suppression suggestions and timelines in the current growing season.

With the steady increase of economically infested acres with grasshoppers currently at 10.15 million acres, favorable climate conditions with climate change more favorable to their populations, grasshoppers in Oregon will continue to thrive and move across the state for



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forage. The department anticipates grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations will expand their ranges where favorable conditions and forage are present.

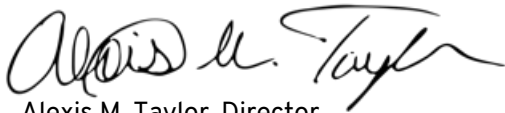
Action Requested

The Department respectfully requests to come before the June meeting of the Emergency Board to request an additional \$1,192,241 General Fund for the cost-share program.

Legislation Affected

Oregon Law 2021, Second Special Session, Chapter 4, Section 7

Sincerely,



Alexis M. Taylor, Director
Oregon Department of Agriculture

