

April 19, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Joint Committee on Ways & Means
900 State Street NE, Room H-178
Salem OR 97301

Re: SB 5555

Gentlemen

As President of the Yamhill County Master Gardener Association, I am writing on behalf of our organization to ask that you continue funding for the Yamhill County Extension Service when considering SB 5555. Oregon State Extension provides unparalleled service to Oregon in supporting small business agriculture and residential gardeners. Extension is a part of the community that is instrumental in filling the needs of all gardeners at every level. Programs such as Garden to Table offer assistance and education to the food insecure population. Community Gardens are supplying the Oregon Food Bank that are so demanding in the times of pandemic. Yamhill County, specifically, has performed outreach at unprecedented numbers to the public, as a go-to-resource for questions of pest control, plant identification, and general improvement to the horticulture environment.

The 4-H program is also vital to our county and state. Its outreach continues the agriculture legacy on which our state was founded. The youth programs instill a love for farming, forestry and more, helping young adults transition into college and beyond to continue that legacy.

Our Extension Service is staffed by dedicated professionals that lead the way on all these programs. They guide our Master Gardener volunteers and offer assistance to execute our mission. Without their unfailing support we would not be able to reach the thousands of citizens who have come to rely on us.

We ask that you recognize how vital the Extension Service is to our community and that you consider its impact when allocating the new fiscal budget.

Sincerely,

Susanne Beukema
President, YCGMA