

Submitter: Jessica McDonald

On Behalf Of: Greenbelt Land Trust

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB3366

I am writing to you from the desk of Greenbelt Land Trust, a nonprofit organization that has called the Willamette Valley home for nearly 35 years. I urge the committee to support HB 3366 and the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) by securing \$10M for grants and \$800,000 for program administration in this legislative session.

As you look at the list of supporters of OAHP, you will see Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, Oregon Farm Bureau, Ducks Unlimited, Oregon Association of Nurseries, 1000 Friends of Oregon, and more. I am proud that OAHP was established through broad support, a testament of how all Oregonians value working lands.

We want to keep working lands in production, support rural businesses and bring an influx of new federal funds into the state through matching incentives provided by these state dollars.

Last session's commitment of \$5M to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program leveraged an additional \$6.7M in federal match for Oregon. And yet we are still leaving millions of dollars on the table every year that we do not have a state match for working lands conservation funding that meets the demand that we are seeing from family farms and conservation organizations. Federal funds are ready to be deployed to working lands projects on the ground in Oregon and it is critical that OAHP to be funded at a level that can maximize these federal opportunities.

The reality is that we are losing precious farmland every day due to fragmentation, increasing land prices, and non-agricultural uses. Oregon has lost farmland every single year since 1997. Farmers and conservation organizations are ready to use OAHP funds today.

I grew up in the rural farmlands of the Willamette Valley and I care about the livelihoods of family farms. We all have a responsibility to protect this beautiful place we call home and the agricultural legacy that defines it.

Greenbelt Land Trust urges your support for HB 3366 and the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, securing \$10 Million for grants and \$800,000 for program administration focused on working lands through this legislative session!