



March 13, 2023

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: Ducks Unlimited Inc.

**RE: Support for HB 3366 – Full Funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)**

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

Ducks Unlimited (DU) **conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl.** These habitats benefit water, fish, other wildlife, and people. DU has in-depth knowledge of agricultural producers' goals, in part from personal experience such as mine as a fifth-generation farming family in the Willamette Valley. Additionally, DU staff form trusting relationships to achieve desired outcomes for agricultural producers' families and property. We assist our partners in creating and achieving visions now and for the future through easements, planning, management, and restoration.

For this reason, DU would like to voice our advocacy of HB 3366 to support producers' efforts for finding sound land management opportunities, preserving agriculture, and enhancing habitat. We strongly believe this is an essential tool DU and other natural resource partners can use for the betterment of Oregon's agricultural communities and landscapes.

This bipartisan bill would fully fund the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). HB 3366 would help farmers and ranchers protect their land from fragmentation and development, while keeping it in production and benefiting local economies and communities. HB 3366 includes \$10 million in grants and \$800,000 in administration funding requested by OWEB for the 2023-2025 biennium.

DU and partners currently have a project near Eugene, Oregon that is recommended for funding by OAHP. In partnership with the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), we are using federal and state funds to leverage more work on the ground. Without either of these funding sources, the likelihood of the project's success decreases substantially. Once this project is fully funded, landowners will be able to utilize the money from conservation easements to focus efforts on their high value farmland. DU and other partners will focus restoration efforts on areas that are wet and challenging to farm. HB 3366 will provide a sustainable source of state matching funds to protect our agricultural land across Oregon.

DU has identified OAHP as a funding source for several additional projects that best fit agricultural producers' needs. Although OAHP is a young program, its applicability and benefits are evident for Oregon and its producers, natural resource partners, fish, wildlife, and habitat.



In addition, the program provides funding for conservation management planning, technical assistance, and succession planning to support our farmers and ranchers.

We respectfully request that Chair Helm and the committee members support this bill, and we would appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Thank you,

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