

THE CONSERVATION FUND

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March 14, 2023

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

From: The Conservation Fund

RE: Support for HB 3366 – Full Funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

My Name is Gates Watson and I serve as Vice President and Northwest Regional Director for The Conservation Fund, a National land conservation organization. We believe that protecting land and water with high conservation value is essential for America's environmental health and economic vitality. The Conservation Fund works in Oregon and around the Country to enable conservationist, government agencies, community leaders and land trusts to swiftly protect property for wildlife, recreation and/or historic values.

I am writing today in support of HB 3366, a bipartisan bill that would fully fund the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program at 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.

HB 3366 will provide a sustainable source of state matching funds to protect our agricultural and ranch land across Oregon. In addition, the program provides funding for conservation management planning, technical assistance, and succession planning to support our farmers and ranchers. We encourage Chair Helm and the committee members to support this bill and appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Thank you,



Gates Watson
V.P., Northwest Regional Director