

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 20, 2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 2134, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) and specifically the inclusion of the following provisions:

- Directs Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) to provide financial assistance to farmers/ranchers for practices that support soil health (\$500,000) as well as technical assistance and equipment for SWCDs (\$480,000).
- Extends funding for ODA's existing Soil Health Specialist (\$272,234).
- Provides resources to OSU Extension for relevant specialist capacity (\$480,000), and OSU College of Agriculture for soil testing (\$225,000).

These soil health provisions in BiDRAWS leverage existing programs and provides capacity to expand resources to support farmers and ranchers with soil health practices that make the most sense for their land and businesses.

These provisions provide a *voluntary, incentive-based approach* that is focused on expanding strategies to advance soil health including:

- Technical assistance from trusted farm service providers--SWCDs and OSU Extension
- Equipment sharing
- Farmer-to-farmer education--because farmers learn best from others farmers
- Financial incentives, through the existing Oregon Agriculture Heritage Program
- Coordination among agencies and entities providing support

Please support and advance HB 2134, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS), with these provisions.

Megan Kemple
Coalition to Advance Soil Health