



February 6, 2024

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
From: Wild Rivers Land Trust

Re: Support for H.B. 4060 – Funding the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program
Chair Helm and Committee Members:

Good afternoon House Committee Members -

My name is Scott Fogarty and I am Executive Director for the Wild Rivers Land Trust (WRLT) . Our mission is to keep the irreplaceable water and working lands on the southern Oregon coast forever wild and abundant. I write to you today in strong support of HB 4060, which would provide \$10.8 million in state funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program.

OAHP protects farm and ranch land from development through working land easements, keeping acres in production and enhancing natural resource values. Without state funding in 2024, \$7.2 million already allocated to Oregon through the Natural Resources Conservation Service for this work risks being returned to the federal government.

WRLT is in the process of securing a Conservation Easement on a fourth generation, 800 acre ranch on Oregon's Dark Coast in Langlois, OR. This project represents the first agricultural easement on Oregon's southern coast and preserves critical agricultural land. This ranch supports the local economy and preserves sustainable ranching practices in the region. WRLT was awarded \$2.7 million for this acquisition from the inaugural OAHP granting opportunity. WRLT has worked with the landowner and NRCS to secure funding to permanently conserve this working land from expanding development in the region.

With \$10.8 million in state funding for OAHP, Oregon can leverage already awarded federal dollars to invest in our vital farm and ranchlands. These investments will protect tens of thousands of agricultural acres across our diverse geography. Please support passage of HB 4060 in the 2024 legislative session. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Fogarty
Executive Director