



WESTERN INVASIVES  
NETWORK

February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Honorable Ken Helm  
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Western Invasives Network, which provides a regional forum for Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs), working groups, and other collaborative partnerships to work together to control invasive species in western Oregon and southwestern Washington. Cooperative groups are critical components of invasive species management since pests and diseases know no boundaries, making collaboration an essential role in addressing these threats to improve the health of our communities and ecosystems in Oregon.

The Western Invasives Network supports House Bill 4148's Wildlife Package, with a particular emphasis on funding for the Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC). The organizations of the Western Invasives Network heavily rely on the guidance of the OISC. Invasive species cannot be effectively controlled without statewide leadership and coordinated efforts. Their planning and implementation of multi-taxa invasive species response operations are crucial for the protection of Oregon's natural resources. The proposed funding for the Emergency Control Account will allow the state to respond quickly to the arrival of new invasive species, like the emerald ash borer, and emerging ones, like quagga mussels.

The partners of the Western Invasives Network manage a multitude of invasive species across many habitats—stretching from our coastlines to the peaks of the Cascades. The priorities of our partners vary greatly across the network and there is no 'one size that fits all' when it comes to addressing invasive species. With such a diverse membership base, funding is one of the greatest challenges we face when dealing with escalating infestations over multiple boundaries. The support of the OISC would allow partners to obtain funding through their proposed Education and Outreach Grant Program. This would provide our partners with a flexible funding opportunity to raise awareness of invasive species. Lastly, as a regional coordinator, I understand the difficulty of balancing time across many projects with allotted funding. House Bill 4148 would increase the OISC Coordinator's contracted hours, which would expand the Council's overall capacity and support to their constituents.

Thank you for your consideration,

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