



January 17, 2025

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

From: American Farmland Trust

RE: Supporting HB 3131 and \$17.3 Million in funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2025-2027 Budget

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you today on behalf of **American Farmland Trust (AFT)** to share our strong support for HB 3131 and its **\$17.3 million** in funding the **Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)** in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session. OAHP helps Oregon leverage a remarkable **2:1 federal match** through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and protects working ranch and farmlands for their agriculture and natural resource values.

Dedicated to saving the land that sustains us, AFT understands that permanent protection of farm and rangeland – like that enabled by OAHP – is essential for preserving working landscapes, supporting food security, and bolstering rural economies. Fully funding OAHP will achieve the following:

- Allow farmers to realize some of the equity in their land without selling part of the farm or selling to developers,
- Help farmers voluntarily maintain and improve farm production while preserving ag land and conserving natural habitat,
- Provide technical assistance to help farmers adapt to climate change and adopt climate-friendly practices, and
- Help farmers find the next generation to take over the land and keep it in production.

OAHP has broad support across the agricultural industry and bipartisan support in the legislature, and the Climate Action Commission has repeatedly recommended funding of OAHP as an important part of Natural and Working Land climate mitigation. Thank you in advance for your support of this critical initiative.

Thank you,

Addie Candib  
Pacific Northwest Regional Director  
American Farmland Trust