

Submitter: Tess Baker

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3131

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

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 to share my 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.

As you may know, the average age of a farmer in Oregon is 60 and 81% of farmers and ranchers have no succession plan. While farmers and ranchers may be resistant to retirement, these numbers point to a much larger issue, agricultural is an incredibly capital-intensive enterprise, making the barrier to entry exceptionally high for young producers. Programs like OAHP allow for creative solutions to this problem, including funding for working lands easements that allow producers to realize some of the equity in their land without selling, which in turn allows more options for their succession planning, and more agricultural land preserved for future generations and the environment.

OAHP has not only been shown to be effective, but also a recipient of bipartisan support. I urge you to support OAHP this legislative cycle.

Thank you,

Tess Baker
Oregon Agricultural Trust Farm & Ranch Succession Advisor