

Submitter: Elizabeth Atherton

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

Subject: Support for HB3173 – Establishing OregonFlora at Oregon State University

Dear Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB3173, which would establish OregonFlora at Oregon State University and provide essential baseline funding for this invaluable resource. OregonFlora plays a crucial role in documenting, preserving, and sharing knowledge about the diverse plant life of our state, benefiting Oregonians from all walks of life.

For over 30 years, OregonFlora has been the premier source of information on Oregon's wild plants, providing an updated taxonomic checklist of 4,886 vascular plant species, including 70% native species and 120 species found nowhere else in the world. The organization has produced the comprehensive three-volume *Flora of Oregon* and maintains an extensive online database that received over 700,000 pageviews last year. This free, publicly accessible website includes 1.48 million mapped plant occurrence records, 63,000+ high-quality images, and user-friendly tools for plant identification and research.

Despite its widespread use by land managers, botanists, educators, gardeners, and conservationists, OregonFlora has relied solely on grants and donations for funding. Given its importance to public agencies, private individuals, and organizations dedicated to environmental stewardship, it is time for the state to provide sustainable financial support. The passage of HB3173 would ensure that OregonFlora remains a well-maintained and evolving resource, benefiting generations to come.

Oregon's unique plant biodiversity is an integral part of our state's identity, economy, and ecological health. By funding OregonFlora through HB3173, the legislature would demonstrate its commitment to conservation, education, and scientific excellence. I urge you to support this bill and help secure the future of OregonFlora as a vital public asset.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Atherton, CPA

