

Submitter: Rachel Werling
On Behalf Of: HB3173 Oregon Flora
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB3173, which seeks to establish OregonFlora in statute and provide stable, long-term funding for this essential public resource. As a botanist and former OSU Extension professional, I have seen firsthand how OregonFlora empowers landowners, conservationists, educators, and community members by providing accurate and accessible information about Oregon's rich plant diversity.

OregonFlora is more than a database—it is an indispensable toolkit that helps users identify native and invasive plants, plan ecologically sound landscapes, and engage in habitat restoration with scientific confidence. Its intuitive interface and rigorous data make it an essential bridge between academic research and practical land stewardship.

Securing ongoing funding through HB3173 will:

- Safeguard over three decades of curated botanical data and ensure its continued relevance through expert stewardship.
- Equip Oregon's landowners, land managers, and educators with the tools they need to make climate-resilient, biodiversity-conscious decisions.
- Support economic sectors—such as agriculture, forestry, native plant nurseries, and recreation—that rely on accurate plant identification and mapping.
- Provide state agencies with a reliable partner in meeting their goals related to native species conservation, invasive species control, and habitat restoration.
- Ensure equitable access to high-quality botanical information for all Oregonians, including rural and under-resourced communities.

By investing in OregonFlora, the Legislature affirms its commitment to sound science, environmental stewardship, and sustainable land use across the state. I urge you to support HB3173 and protect this vital resource for future generations.

Sincerely,

Rachel Werling
Ashland OR