

Submitter: Jason Clinch
On Behalf Of: HB3173OregonFlora
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

April 16, 2025

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 3173 (Oregon Flora) - SUPPORT

Dear Committee members:

I am the principal biologist for Three Creeks Consulting LLC, a small environmental consulting firm that works on wetland-related and land management projects, as well as botanical survey/inventory projects across Oregon. I am also a native plant gardener/enthusiast and a Director-at-Large for the Native Plant Society of Oregon.

I strongly support HB 3173 and encourage you to, as well.

Being an environmental consultant means I wear a lot of different hats and have an understanding of a lot of different industries, land uses, and environmental conditions. I work with developers, farmers, ranchers, forest managers, conservation land trust managers, and state natural resource/regulatory staff in identifying existing habitats and vegetation and recommending plant species to be used in mitigation, restoration, and revegetation projects (wetland and otherwise). OregonFlora helps me know what plants have been documented nearby and how to identify them, including invasive species and species that are rare or of conservation concern. I use OregonFlora's almost daily to document plant diversity on these properties and to recommend and integrate locally native and ecologically preferable plants into restoration and revegetation projects. The efficient presentation of plant occurrences from multiple datasets on OregonFlora is essential to my work. Not only does this help drive business toward the expanding native plant horticultural industry for mitigation, restoration, and revegetation materials (an economic benefit), but it provides even bigger ecological benefits to me and my fellow Oregonians. Knowing that OregonFlora's data is up-to-date and curated by professional taxonomists gives me assurance that my work is accurate and can be shared with others. Knowing that my cohorts in these industries also use OregonFlora as a resource, gives us a common point of reference when discussing these projects. Ongoing stewardship of this resource is essential.

As a member of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, I rely on information from OregonFlora to enhance my appreciation of our rich flora and to share that appreciation and knowledge with other Oregon residents and visitors. I often peruse various inventories and species lists on OregonFlora before picking where to go on

my next "botanical adventure". My contributions of plant occurrences and collections have helped build OregonFlora as a public resource and one that should not simply go away due to a lack of funding one day. The expert curation of the information by OregonFlora's team means it is accurate and valuable for both professional and casual use.

It's quite obvious that wildfire, drought, and rising temperatures are adversely impacting our lives and the lands we live on. Healthy and sustainable ecosystems are critical to Oregon's economy because they support industries in timber, recreation and tourism, conservation, and hunting and fishing, as well as providing clean water, air, and soil. Understanding how to identify and sustain the plant communities present in these ecosystems will help keep them healthy into the future. OregonFlora's database manages and shares ~1.5 million Oregon plant occurrence records through interactive mapping tools on its website. This comprehensive dataset is essential to understanding which plant communities and ecosystems might be vulnerable to climate change-induced events. Importantly, it provides the core reference information needed to mitigate and restore landscapes damaged by these events.

Keeping OregonFlora current and operable for the modest investment of \$400K/biennium will preserve decades of knowledge and work that public agencies, non-profits, and businesses do not have the time, financial resources, nor expertise to maintain and will help these entities meet their missions.

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