



February 4, 2026

To: Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Tawna Sanchez
From: 1000 Friends of Oregon

Dear Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the 2026 legislative session and the state budget priorities before the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means. For over 50 years, our organization has partnered with Oregonians, Oregon cities and towns, and Oregon businesses to promote livable communities, protect working lands, and support transportation and housing systems that help all Oregonians thrive.

We urge the Committee to support targeted investments that protect Oregon's natural resources, strengthen rural and urban economies, and advance housing and transportation solutions statewide. In particular, we support continued or restored funding for the following priorities:

Maintain Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) funding

OAHP is a cost-effective program that helps willing farm and ranch landowners permanently protect working lands through conservation easements. Since receiving funding in 2022, the program has leveraged millions in federal match dollars and remains oversubscribed. Proposed reductions would jeopardize already-submitted applications and risk the loss of federal dollars. OAHP complements Oregon's land use system by supporting farm viability and intergenerational land transfer, and we urge the Committee to protect its full funding.

Reinstate funding for Japanese beetle eradication

The Japanese beetle poses a serious and preventable threat to Oregon's nursery and greenhouse industry, the state's top agricultural commodity by sales. Prior eradication efforts were making real progress before funding was reduced. Restoring this program, paired with modest fee adjustments, protects a \$1.22 billion industry and preserves access to out-of-state markets that rely on Oregon's pest-free status.

Additionally, we urge the Legislature to maintain the **1.25% dedication for wildlife**, continue funding for **FFA and 4-H programs that support the next generation of agricultural leaders**, and invest in **affordable housing preservation and revolving loan funds** that help stabilize communities and prevent displacement.

We also support an additional investment in the **industrial land readiness revolving loan program** to ensure communities across Oregon are prepared for job-creating development while protecting surrounding farmland and natural resources. To responsibly fund these priorities and avoid cuts to essential services, we urge the Legislature to **disconnect from wasteful federal tax code changes** that primarily benefit corporations and the wealthy. Oregon should reclaim control of its tax policy to prevent the replication of federal tax breaks that contribute to budget shortfalls and shift costs onto the state, allowing lawmakers to recover hundreds of millions of dollars to protect housing, health care, education, and other services that Oregon families rely on.

We believe these priorities represent smart, fiscally responsible investments for Oregonians across the state. Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,
Samuel Diaz
Executive Director
1000 Friends of Oregon