



Columbia Gorge
fruit growers



OREGON
WHEAT



June 12, 2020

Honorable Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Honorable Elizabeth Steiner Hayward Co-Chair
Honorable Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways & Means
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon State University Statewides Budget

Dear Senators Johnson, Steiner Hayward and Representative Rayfield:

Our collective organizations represent Oregon's ranchers, farmers, orchards, dairies and agri-business throughout Oregon. We are writing to you today to express our significant concern regarding the potential budget reductions to Oregon State University's Statewide Public Service Programs.

As you know, these programs known as the "OSU Statewides", including the Agricultural Experiment Station, Extension Service, and Forest Research Laboratory, provide state-of-the-art research and outreach in all 36 counties in Oregon. The programs apply expertise and advice generated by scientists and extension agents to real-world problems such as pollinator health, pesticides management, water quality and quantity, access to high-quality and nutritional food, and many other environmental, health and economic development issues facing both rural and urban Oregonians across the state.

Unfortunately, the Governor's requested 8.5% budget reduction exercise submitted by the University revealed a devastating \$12.2M cut to OSU Statewide programs, including a \$6.3M reduction to the Agriculture Experiment Station, \$4.5M reduction to Extension Services, \$971,043 reduction to the Forest Research Laboratory and \$596,665 in targeted appropriation reductions including work focused on water quantity and quality and wildfire resiliency. Cuts of this magnitude would result in the following impacts:

- Producers would likely sustain economic damages if resources for research and extension were restricted or personnel reduced. For example, OSU plant pathologists play a critical role in early identification of disease pressures. This allows producers to limit economic losses from crop damage and reduce the amount of pesticides/herbicides/fungicides applied. This year, extensive stripe rust disease problems were identified early by OSU researchers, allowing wheat producers to address the issue before more extensive crop losses were incurred.
- Slowing critical research and development for new plant varieties. Ever-changing disease complexes, management practices, production constraints, and market needs require an ongoing

commitment to high-yielding, disease resistant cultivar development. This research leverages significant industry funds and in collaboration with universities across the nation.

- Potential loss of long-term data and research, which informs both formulation of sound land management decisions and natural resource policy. OSU maintains long term cropping and forest system studies. As an example, the Crop Residue Management and Tillage-Fertility experiments are among the oldest replicated research experiments in the western U.S. They generate useful information for both growers and policy makers – particularly as producers face increasing climate variability. These plots will play an important role in carbon sequestration research focused on the local environment.
- Significant decrease in the cattle industry’s ability to address meat processing, livestock, and natural resource issues and challenges that were amplified during the COVID pandemic. The industry relies heavily on the research and outreach provided by OSU Statewides to develop state, regional, and national policies associated with land and livestock management, without these services progress will be greatly reduced.

You and your colleagues confirmed the importance of these programs run by the OSU Statewides last session, when you voted to increase their base budget – allowing them to finally fully recover from budget reductions taken in 2008. Similarly to those past reductions, this \$12.2M reduction will undoubtedly take years to recover from and will likely result in an inability for OSU Statewides to continue providing key services in new and innovative formats.

We acknowledge the unique state of Oregon’s economy and recognize the difficult decisions you will have to make in the upcoming weeks and months ahead. Due to their statewide significance, we ask that the OSU Statewides do not take a disproportionate cut compared to the rest of higher education. We look forward to continuing to work with you to help minimize the impacts of budget reductions on these invaluable programs.

Sincerely,

J.R. Cook, Director
Northeast Oregon Water Association

Dave Dillon, Executive Vice President
Oregon Farm Bureau

Mike Doke, Executive Director
Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers

Amanda Hoey, Chief Executive Officer
Oregon Wheat Growers League

Margaret Jensen, Executive Director
Far West Agribusiness Association

Tami Kerr, Executive Director
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association

Elin Miller and Ken Johnston, Board Co-Chairs
Oregon Wine Council

Polly Owen, Research Director
Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries

Jerome Rosa, Executive Director
Oregon Cattlemen’s Association

Anthony Weathers, President
Oregon Hop Growers Association