



April 17, 2017

Testimony on SB 5524
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Chairs Monroe and Smith Warner, members of the Committee:

We respectfully urge your support for providing an increase in funding for the OSU Statewide Public Service Programs of \$9.4 million, the amount needed to maintain current service levels and protect important investments in these programs made last biennium.

Friends of Family Farmers represents small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers across Oregon and we were part of a diverse coalition that supported legislation in 2015 to increase funding for OSU Extension and Agricultural Experiment Stations. These programs provide technical support, educational opportunities and research important to farmers and ranchers of all types throughout the state.

Through an additional \$14 million approved by the Legislature in 2015, OSU was able to deepen investments in programs that support small farms, beginning farmers, community food systems, pollinator health, fermentation sciences, water quality protection, food safety and more.

While the Governor's recommended budget for the 2017-19 biennium kept these funding levels for the OSU Statewide Public Service Programs in place, it did not account for an additional \$9.4 million needed to actually *maintain* current service levels for these programs. Because of this, without an increase in \$9.4 million for the upcoming biennium, the \$14 million in new investments made in 2015 to the OSU Statewide Public Service Programs could be largely eliminated, in effect being reduced by 70%.

Without an increase in funding to maintain current service levels, the shortfall will be approximately \$5 million for Agricultural Experiment Stations, and \$3.6 million for the Extension Service.

Our members across the state utilize and benefit from the highly professional technical support, educational programming and research provided by Oregon's Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Extension Service. State investment in these programs also helps leverage federal grant dollars, and the elimination of research positions will inhibit OSU's ability to compete for federal grant funding.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

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