



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon

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**Testimony to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,
on Senate Bill 5524**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

OEC supports recovering the \$9.4 million of funding for the OSU Statewide Public Service Programs that was reduced in the Governor's recommended budget.

OEC recognizes the contribution of the OSU's Statewide Public Service Programs to all Oregonians – students, farmers and ranchers, elected officials, children and youth, and the environment. We also acknowledge that Statewides are essential for achieving goals in OEC's areas of interest. Reductions in the use of toxic chemicals, improvements in water quality and water efficiency, providing community health services, and climate change adaptation and resilience are all supported by the research and outreach efforts of the Statewides

As you know, the Oregon State University Statewide Public Service Programs – 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 expertise and advice generated by scientists and extension agents continues to solve such real-world problems as pollinator health, water quality in onion crops, the impact of ocean conditions on Oregon's oyster hatcheries, access to high-quality nutritional food, the ecology and potentially limiting factors of marbled murrelets, and many other environmental quality and economic development issues facing Oregonians across the state.

Our work with the Clackamas Pesticide Stewardship Partnership has shown us how effective Extension staff can be in coordinating the dissemination of information to producers – delivering IPM workshops in collaboration with IPPC staff to nursery operators and Christmas tree growers. Monitoring has showed measurable reductions in pesticides in streams where growers participated in workshops.

During the 2015 legislative session, after a year of activism by a broad coalition of advocates, the legislature approved a \$14 million increase for these programs. The resulting \$118 million funding level enabled OSU to hire some 40 new research and extension positions across the state to address significant challenges facing Oregon family farmers, low income families, and Oregon's natural resources enterprises. This was a monumental step – reversing a 15-year decline when these vital programs were forced to eliminate positions and programs that served a diversity of Oregonians in all 36 counties in the state. The information garnered from the collaborative and expansive research will ensure that policies are based on the best scientific data available.

Maintaining funding levels for the Statewides' budget will avoid elimination of valuable staff. Because most of the funds are used to cover personnel costs, the primary tool the Statewides have to manage their costs during budget reductions is through the elimination of positions. And because many positions within the Statewides are "shared appointments" that have both teaching and research responsibilities, there will also be impacts on the university's education enterprise. The elimination of research positions also inhibits OSU's ability to compete for

federal funding. OSU estimates that every state dollar invested in the OSU Statewides leverages federal grants, capacity funds and private donations for nearly \$10 in economic benefits to the state.

OEC is convinced any reductions to the budget of the Statewides and the consequent loss of staff positions will have severe and negative consequences for all Oregonians. We urge you to ensure that the OSU Statewides retain sufficient funding to continue providing support, knowledge and expertise to both urban and rural Oregonians in every corner of the state.