



**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**



**2024
Environmental Justice Council
ANNUAL REPORT**



**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

Protect. Promote. Prosper.

Director's Office
635 Capitol St NE, Salem, OR 97301-2532
503.986.4550 | Oregon.gov/ODA

January 17, 2025

Environmental Justice Council
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Sent via email: van.nguyen@deq.oregon.gov

Dear Environmental Justice Council Members,

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) appreciates the Environmental Justice Council (EJC) and its members' contribution to advancing environmental justice in Oregon. To fulfill the annual reporting responsibilities under ORS 182.550, the Department respectfully submits ODA's 2024 EJC report. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Christina Higby at 503.510.4907 or christina.higby@oda.oregon.gov.

Sincerely,

Lisa Charpillotz Hanson, Director
Oregon Department of Agriculture

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AGENCY INTRODUCTION

ODA Overview

Established in 1931, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) consolidated 13 separate boards, bureaus, and commissions to support agriculture, enhance market access for producers, and promote resilient natural resources for their prosperity. Today, ODA unifies 38 programs operationalized by a \$190 million budget and 523 staff across Oregon to serve and support over 35,000 farms, of which 96% are family-owned, growing, producing, and marketing 225+ commodities.

Approximately seven percent (4,443) of Oregon's agricultural producers identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). This diverse group represents approximately 3,876 farms on 1,451,442 acres of land (ten percent of all agricultural acres) and accounts for a market value of approximately \$1,082,267,000 of agricultural products sold yearly.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA, Agency, or Department) is a diverse state agency and serves a wide range of industries in Oregon. ODA operates as a working agency, with staff frequently in the field and community, directly engaging the public and partners. ODA's headquarters is in Salem and supports a combination of work models. ODA's headquarters maintains the core staff needed to provide excellent customer service to the public. ODA also maintains regional offices where some permanent staff are based. Additional permanent staff, who moved to a hybrid model during COVID-19, routinely work out of their homes. The hybrid-stationed employees work in nearly every program within the Agency. Seasonal employees are positioned throughout the state, providing industry-requested inspection services for the fruit and vegetable industry, Animal Health and Identification programs, or pest detection services.

Equity Statement

ODA promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in our work. While recognizing historical disparities of the past, we make it our responsibility to:

- Create an environment where every staff member feels recognized, valued, and empowered to contribute to our agency's mission.
- Provide culturally responsive services to the people of Oregon, fostering collaborative partnerships.
- Implement policies and actions that prioritize equity for all people in Oregon, support robust agricultural and food economies, and promote environmental stewardship and sustainability.

To demonstrate our dedication to equity, we commit to:

- Provide equity in the allotment and use of ODA resources.
- We regularly review and transform our policies, procedures, systems, and practices to reflect our faithfulness to diversity and inclusion.
- Align our core values with our commitment to cultivating a workplace culture rooted in equity and belonging.

ODA commits to integrating equity into our identity, ensuring we are recognized as an agency that protects, promotes, and prospers.

Vision, Mission & Values

VISION

A resilient tomorrow for generations to come.

MISSION

Protect. Promote. Prosper.

We safeguard Oregon's agriculture, natural resources, working lands, economies, and communities through assistance, compliance, and market support.

VALUES

We are proud to be AGGIES, embodying our mission and values to achieve our vision.

A Approachable

Accessible and friendly, fostering a welcoming environment

G Genuine

Sincere in interactions, emphasizing honesty and integrity

G Growth-Oriented

Committed to continuous improvement and development

I Inclusive

A culture that ensures the dignity of every individual is honored, heard, valued, and respected.

E Experts

Driven by professional and scientific competency

S Sustainable

Building strong relationships and continuity for a resilient tomorrow

Agency Strategic Plan

The Oregon Department of Agriculture's 2024-27 [Strategic Plan](#), finalized in June 2024, reaffirms our commitment to resilient and prosperous agriculture and food communities and working lands. Our community strength is rooted in all peoples' diverse perspectives, interests, and identities—each crucial to our success. This plan results from a comprehensive and inclusive engagement process involving agency staff, private sector entities, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, communications with Tribes, the State Board of Agriculture, and others who provided valuable input through public comment. We believe that integrating the values of AGGIES into service enhancements, compliance activities, and strengthening our core work is vital for shaping a resilient and equitable future.

Guided by Governor Kotek's priorities, ODA has a clear mandate to improve the lives of people in Oregon. We are committed to delivering services, inspiring leadership, and promoting equity and inclusion. At the heart of the Agency's mission is the question: "How do we eliminate barriers so all people in Oregon can thrive?" ODA's Strategic Plan includes strategies to engage communities, allocate resources equitably, and support those we serve. ODA's top priorities through 2027 include organizational excellence, talent, engagement, program modernization, and improved customer service. These priorities are integral to our strategic direction and goals.

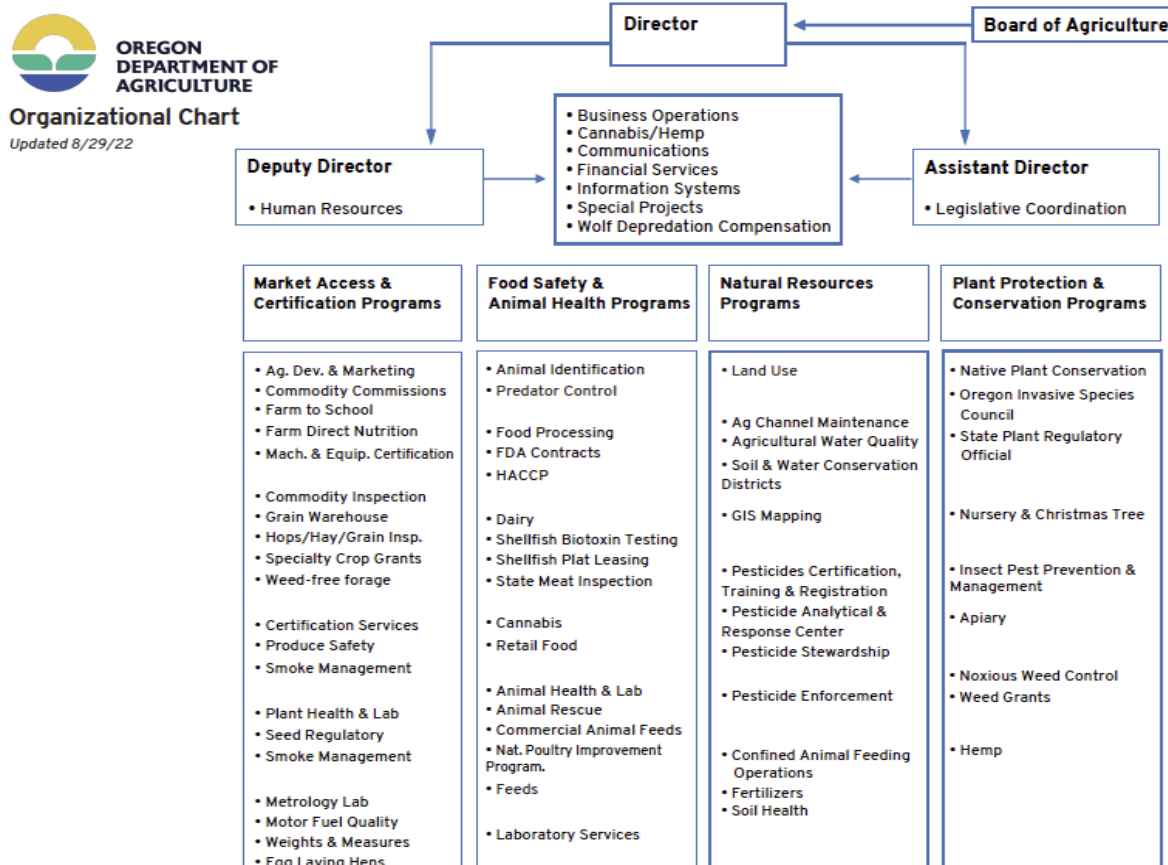
ODA is organized around this mission and is empowered primarily under the following Oregon Revised Statutes 561, 564, 568 and 570 through 635, and 315 and Oregon Administrative Rules 603 through 605, 607, 609, 611, 617, 619, 623, 642 through 648, 656 through 658, 664, 668 through 670, 678, and 972.

Agency Leadership

The Agency's Leadership Team provides the foundation to fulfill the Agency's statutory mandate and ensures that its established mission and values are upheld.

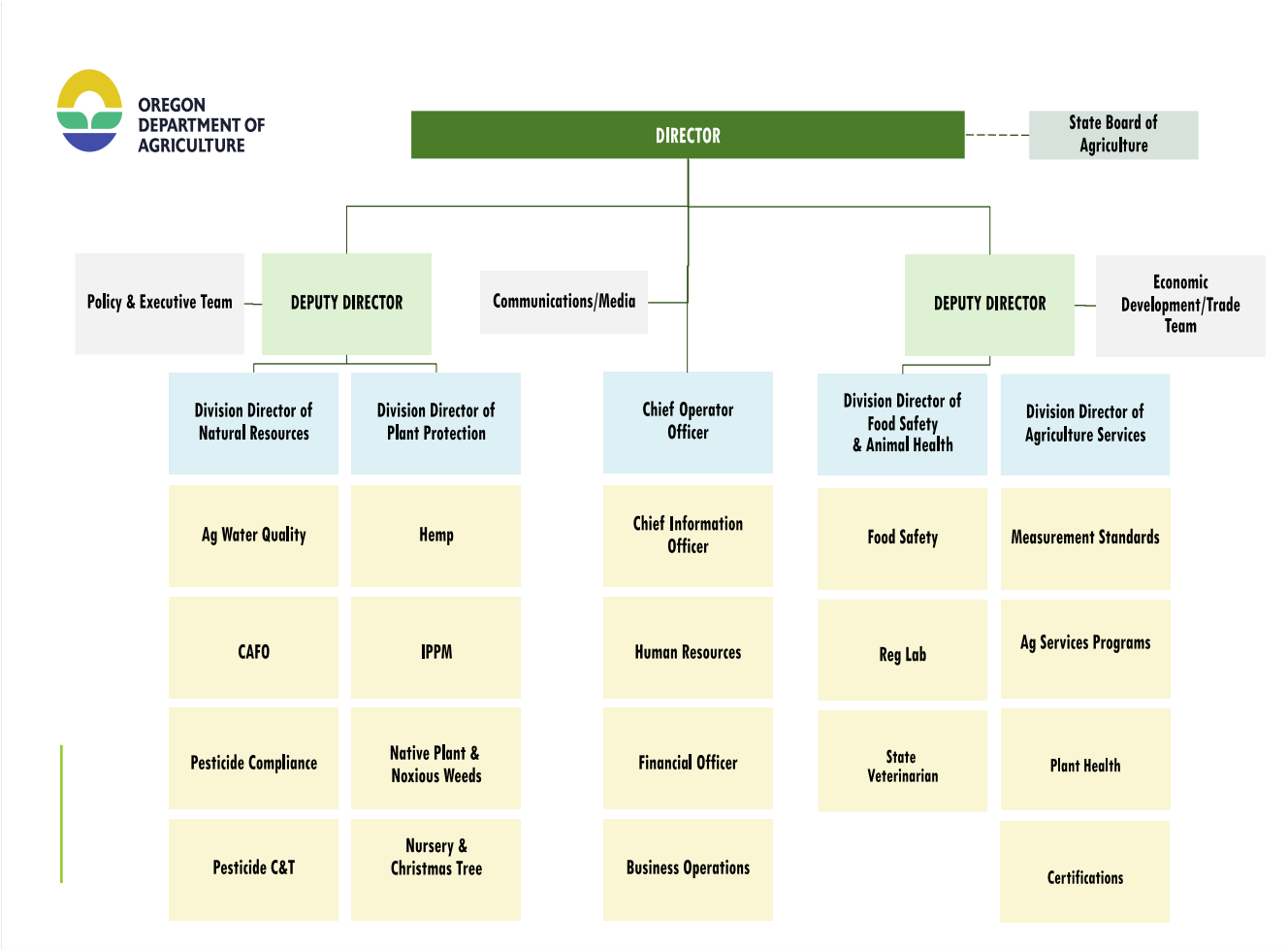
- **Lisa Charpilloz Hanson**, Director
- **Lindsay Eng**, Deputy Director
- **Jonathan Sandau**, Deputy Director
- **Andrea Cantu-Schomus**, Director of Communications
- **Casey Prentiss**, Agriculture Services Division Director
- **Rusty Rock**, Food Safety & Animal Health Division Director
- **Isaak Stapleton**, Natural Resources Division Director
- **Chris Benemann**, Plant Protection Division Director

ODA Organizational Chart



In October 2024, ODA updated its organizational structure to better meet customer needs and improve services. ODA’s Director appointed two Deputy Directors to manage four Division areas. A new Chief Operations Officer was created and will be responsible for the day-to-day business operations to support the Division areas. ODA’s Citizen Advocate works with ODA’s Directors and program managers on outreach and coordination efforts to address environmental justice issues in Oregon that align with the Agency’s responsibilities.

Please note the Summary of 2024 ODA EJC Report below reflect the January – September 2024 organizational structure.



Agency Budget and Program Area Descriptions

The ODA is supported with General Fund, Measure 76 Lottery Funds, Other Funds, and Federal Funds. Measure 76 Lottery Funds provide resources to secure and restore habitats for native fish and wildlife, and maintain diverse plants, animals, and ecosystems. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other federal agencies also provide funding for the Department’s budget. ODA’s adopted 2023-2025 budget of \$172,912,171 comes from \$54,006,785 General Fund, \$8,834,102 Measure 76 Lottery Funds, \$90,424,789 Other Funds expenditure limitation, and \$19,646,495 Federal Funds expenditure limitation. ODA received 521 positions (401.00 FTE) for the 2023-25 biennium.

Agency Program Areas

The ODA's budget and budgeted organizational structure are comprised of four program/policy areas: Administration and Support Services, Food Safety/Consumer Protection, Natural Resources (including Plant Protection and Conservation Programs), and Market Access Development and Certification/ Inspection.

Administration

The Administration and Support Services Program Area manages the executive functions of ODA through the Director's Office, the Information/Communication Office, and the Administrative Services Offices. These offices play an integral role in ensuring the successful operation of the ODA.

The Director's Office provides direction and management to all ODA programs and associated activities. The Director's Office works with the State Board of Agriculture and many other natural resource, agricultural industry, and consumer groups to support the agency's mission and goals. This program area also coordinates other special projects.

The Information/Communications Office responds to public and media inquiries using various platforms. The Administrative Services Office provides the critical core infrastructure for ODA programs and customers, including accounting, financial management, human resources, payroll and benefits, information systems, licensing, fleet and facility management, and purchasing and contracts.

Food Safety & Animal Health

The Food Safety Program works to help prevent the spread of foodborne illness. This is accomplished by monitoring Oregon's food industry, enforcing state sanitation laws, inspecting food establishments in Oregon, and ensuring the consumer gets food that is not contaminated, mislabeled, misrepresented, or changed in any way that would impair safety, wholesomeness, or purity.

The Animal Health Program is responsible for protecting the health of Oregon livestock. This responsibility is carried out through four primary statutory responsibilities – Livestock Disease Control and Response, Animal Disease Traceability (ADT), Animal Emergency Planning and Response, and providing veterinary oversight to the State Meat Inspection Program. Three additional programs with similar missions – Animal Health Laboratory, Commercial Feed Licensing, and Animal Rescue Entity Licensing – also exist within the Animal Health Program.

Natural Resources

ODA's Natural Resources Program Area protects Oregon's natural resources for future generations, supports clean water and healthy fish, wildlife, and native plant populations, promotes soil health practices, keeps farm and ranch lands in agricultural use, reduces exposure to toxins, and maintains agriculture's economic sustainability. The seven (7) specific programs within this program area work with a variety of customers, including private agricultural landowners, public land managers, permitted Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO), commercial pest control businesses, pesticide and fertilizer manufacturers and distributors, Tribes, federal, state, and local governments, and the public who benefit from the natural resource protection offered through these programs. These programs encompass Agricultural Water Quality, CAFO, Pesticide Compliance & Enforcement, Pesticide Registration & Licensing, Fertilizer, Pesticide Analytical & Response Center (PARC), and Soil

& Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). It also encompasses the Citizen Advocate, Land Use & Water Planning Coordinator, and Geographic Information System (GIS) staff.

Plant Protection

ODA's Plant Protection Program Area includes Insect Pest Prevention and Management (IPPM), Native Plant Conservation, Noxious Weed Control, Hemp, and Nursery & Christmas Tree. These programs protect Oregon's agricultural industries and natural environment from harmful plant pests, diseases, and noxious weeds; enhance the value and marketability of exported nursery stock; assist the industry in producing hemp plants and products within regulatory guidelines; and conserve threatened and endangered plants.

Market Access and Certification

The Market Access and Certification Programs include a group of closely intertwined programs that operate statewide to assist Oregon's agricultural producers and businesses in successfully selling and shipping products to local, national, and international markets. The programs also provide regulatory oversight and technical assistance. Market Access and Certification programs include Livestock Identification, Certification, Plant Health, Produce Safety, Seed Regulatory, Shipping Point Inspection, Smoke Management, and Weights and Measures.

Boards and Commissions

ODA's work is guided by the State Board of Agriculture and commodity commissions, which influence the Agency, and set industry standards to maintain Oregon agriculture's high competitiveness in local, national, and international markets. Over 30 boards, commissions, committees, and councils help support Oregon agriculture and are made up of volunteers dedicated to providing sound guidance and advice. As vacancies become available, ODA's recruitment process incorporates outreach to individuals and groups that represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. This includes members or representatives of environmental justice communities that have expertise or expressed interest on the topic(s) being discussed. Included below are a couple of examples of what boards and commissions do to support ODA's work. To see the full list visit

<https://oda.direct/boards-commissions>

Board of Agriculture - The 10-member State Board of Agriculture advises the Agency on policy issues, develops recommendations on key agricultural issues, and provides advocacy for the state's agriculture industry in general. The board issues a biennial report to the Governor and Legislative Assembly regarding the status of Oregon's agriculture industry. The board meets quarterly at various locations around the state.

Oregon Commodity Commissions – Commodity commissions have supported growers since 1943. All 22 commodity commissions operate under ODA oversight. Commodity commissioners carry out important decision-making for their individual commodity. Each year, commissioners develop and submit a budget, for the ODA Director's approval, using their grower assessments (and other funds that may be available) for projects including non-branded promotion, research, and education. Commissioners determine the projects that will best benefit the commodity.

Environmental Justice Personnel

Lisa Charpillouz Hanson, Director

Lindsay Eng, Deputy Director
Jonathan Sandau, Deputy Director
Andrea Cantu-Schomus, Director of Communications
Isaak Stapleton, Natural Resources Division Director / DEI Committee Chair
Christina Higby, Environmental Justice and Tribal Liaison (Citizen Advocate)

ODA Directors offer leadership and support to Environmental Justice (EJ) work at the Agency. They consistently communicate with industry and consumer groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community members, as well as other natural resource agencies and groups, including local, state, and federal partners.

The Director of Communications manages ODA's Information/Communications Office, which aims to deliver clear and concise communication. The office focuses on informing Oregonians about the importance of Oregon's agriculture, food, fisheries, and natural resource sectors to the state. Additionally, it highlights the employment opportunities directly and indirectly linked to agriculture and emphasizes agriculture's environmental investments in protecting, preserving, and enhancing Oregon's natural and working lands. The Office works with ODA programs to communicate with diverse groups using a variety of media, including translation of notices and advisories into other languages. They respond to public and media inquiries through various platforms, issue news releases, and shares crucial information, including food recalls. The Information Office also operates as the primary point of contact for public records requests.

The DEI Committee, established in 2019, works to look at ways ODA programs can improve inclusive language, translation services, and resources to support DEIB opportunities. ODA's DEI Committee has supported programs aimed at enhancing access to preferred language in written and verbal communications. Major publications, news releases, and program information are being translated and shared across platforms to expand accessibility, and internal and external support has improved and continues to strengthen ODA's DEI objectives and goals. DEI Committee goals include expanding outreach efforts and translation of materials to reach customers who speak languages other than English; continue to expand social awareness and acceptance of DEI principles among staff and identify resources as needed to further those efforts; develop guidance for inclusive language use in ODA materials; work to ensure that ODA is an inclusive workplace, including a focus on recruitment and retention. ODA's Representative to the Environmental Justice Council is a member of ODA's DEI Committee.

Additionally, ODA's directors, supervisors, and program staff each have an important role in supporting the advancement of EJ considerations at ODA and consult with ODA's Citizen Advocate and Liaison as needed for document review, considerations, and outreach efforts to maximize inclusivity in ODA activities. The Citizen Advocate and Liaison's position serves as the agency representative to the EJC and actively participates in meetings to report agency activities and inform the Department of EJ issues associated with ODA authority. ODA's website has a dedicated [Environmental Justice webpage](#) with resources and contact information for internal and external parties interested in ODA's EJ work.

ODA's Citizen Advocate also serves as the Agency's Tribal Liaison. This position is the point of contact for the federally recognized tribes in Oregon; to advocate for and facilitate consultation and coordination efforts between Oregon's tribal nations and ODA. The Citizen Advocate works with ODA staff and the Director's Office to maintain good working relationships with tribal nations in Oregon

and inform and encourage participation in activities and rulemaking opportunities provided by the Agency. ODA's website has a dedicated [Oregon Tribes](#) webpage to provide resources and contact information for interested parties. Staff throughout ODA regularly collaborate with tribal nations on a wide range of topics, as detailed in ODA's [2024 Government-to-Government Annual Report](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS

ODA programs aim to be mindful when providing outreach, developing resources, and engaging in activities. This mindfulness ensures that potentially affected communities and interested parties are aware of and can participate in, discussions about agency actions and activities. Staff have the expertise to determine the type of outreach to engage with the community based on a variety of factors including past experiences, recommendations, and feedback from actively engaged community partners, agencies, and local leaders. Engagement efforts include the most effective modes of communication (email, flyers, mailers, social media, presentations, radio, and/or television) best suited for the type of activity, and demographic information such as language needs to maximize inclusivity efforts. Each program has a wide range of techniques to reach its target audiences, whether it be households in a specific ZIP code or landowners in a rural region. Programs over time have identified and developed good working relationships with local, state, and federal partners, industry groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others to help identify and reach out to target audiences based on the program area topic. ODA's Citizen Advocate may also be consulted and utilized to help improve outreach efforts to maximize inclusive participation in ODA's activities and rulemaking processes. Below are examples of work that highlights the Agency's environmental justice efforts in 2024. It also highlights the collaboration and coordination efforts routinely conducted with other partners. Most of the Agency's work is ongoing and future planned activities for the coming year may be included in the summary sections.

Strategic Plan

ODA is continuously looking at ways to increase outreach and engagement opportunities with Oregonians that are interested or may be impacted by ODA's decisions. On June 27, 2024, ODA updated its Strategic Plan which incorporated key objectives to identify and remove barriers so all people in Oregon can thrive. The plan includes strategies to engage communities, allocate resources equitably, and support those we serve.

Highlights below show examples of how the Agency is putting this work into practice.

Nitrate Reduction Plan for the LUBGWMA

In September 2024, the [Oregon Nitrate Reduction Plan](#) for the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) was released in partnership with the Governor's Office, DEQ, ODA, WRD, and OHA. The plan details the state's key strategies to reduce groundwater nitrate concentrations and address public health.

ODA is focusing work within the Agricultural Water Quality, Confined Animal Feeding Operations and Fertilizer Programs to address water quality in the LUBGWMA. The following activities have happened or are in progress:

- ODA established the first groundwater focused Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) in Morrow County. This includes a section of the LUBGWMA on the south side of I-84 near Boardman. ODA has identified 600 landowners and plans to work with them to better understand agricultural management practices and work to make improvements and protect groundwater. ODA is actively working with the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to assess and implement the SIA process. All materials were translated to Spanish and distributed alongside the English versions as part of outreach efforts to encourage participation and ensure understanding of the work being conducted.

- On April 18, 2024, ODA's Director and staff participated in the LUBGWMA Open House along with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Oregon Water Resource Department (WRD). This event was part of a collaborative effort to provide outreach and education on the work state agencies are doing to address water quality in the area. Spanish translation services were also provided to ensure effective communication and meaningful involvement could be achieved.
- ODA's WQ program has an open position that will focus 50% of their time in the LUBGWMA. Recruitment to fill the position is anticipated in early 2025.
- ODA committed staff time to actively participate in the LUBGWMA Committee and Subcommittee meetings.

Pesticide Program

The Pesticide Program continues to work closely with Oregon State University (OSU) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) on increasing awareness on the school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) law. In 2024, ODA investigative/enforcement staff presented on the school IPM law at ten OSU School IPM Coordinator trainings around the state. Additionally, the program continues to work on a special project, as time allows, which involves creating "school IPM law modules" - (short ~5-10 minutes) narrated PowerPoints focused on the law's requirements. These modules are posted on YouTube for school IPM coordinators and other school staff and are available in Spanish. To help conduct the work on the creation of the school IPM law modules, EPA awarded the Pesticide Enforcement Program a Special Project Grant of \$10,417. The modules can be accessed at <https://oda.fyi/IPMSchoolsPlaylist>.

During Winter of 2024, many programs at ODA, including Pesticide Product Registration, Fertilizer Product Registration, and Pesticide Licensing, sent out license renewal information for licenses to be renewed at the end of the calendar year. Information this year was also included in Spanish. Additionally, programs are working to have the initial applications that are not renewals translated into Spanish. The goal is to increase awareness and understanding of ODA's Pesticide Program and help encourage more meaningful involvement with customers that utilize ODA's services.

EPA has proposed relying more on online tools for access to regulatory requirements for pesticide applicators. The Pesticides Program has advocated for alternative approaches by engaging with EPA and submitting comment letters to EPA voicing the challenges rural applicators with poor to no internet connections will face if they cannot access regulatory requirements that are primarily available online.

Pesticide Stewardship Partnership

The Pesticides Stewardship Program (PSP) is a voluntary program that relies on local partnerships to monitor pesticide levels in waterways and enact solutions to protect water quality while managing pests and maintaining crop yield. Local efforts include implementing projects based on technical assistance, outreach, education and pesticide collection events. The PSP works as a feedback loop, using water quality sampling data to continuously evaluate pesticides of concern and assess the effectiveness of education and collaborative projects on an annual basis. There are currently nine (9) PSP areas across the state that cover a range of land uses and partner groups. The goals of the PSP program are to:

- Identify potential concerns and improve water quality affected by pesticide use around Oregon.

- Combine local expertise and water quality sampling results to encourage voluntary changes in pesticide use and management practices.
- Find ways to reduce pesticide levels while measuring improvements in water quality and crop management.
- Work toward measurable environmental improvements.

In 2023, DEQ received a \$6 million award from the US EPA's Columbia River Basin Restoration Funding Assistance Program. As part of this, \$750,000 has been allocated to ODA to support the education and outreach efforts of the PSP Partners. In 2024, the PSP made the funding available to local Lead Partners (soil and water conservation districts, watershed councils, and/or Oregon State University), to increase funding of locally led outreach, stewardship, and technical assistance programs designed to educate pesticide users on how to keep pesticides onsite and out of the aquatic environment. Some of these efforts include reaching out to pesticide applicators in different languages and collaborations with other sections of the Pesticides Program (e.g. Certification and Licensing team) for assistance in updating materials.

Worker Protection Standard

In 2024, the Pesticides Program hired a new Worker Protection Standard (WPS) Outreach Specialist. The WPS is a federal rule which aims to reduce pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. The WPS Outreach Specialist is bilingual in English and Spanish and has been focusing on attending outreach events to connect with the agricultural communities covered by the WPS. The WPS Outreach Specialist is also working to provide compliance assistance to agricultural employers who are also covered by WPS requirements.

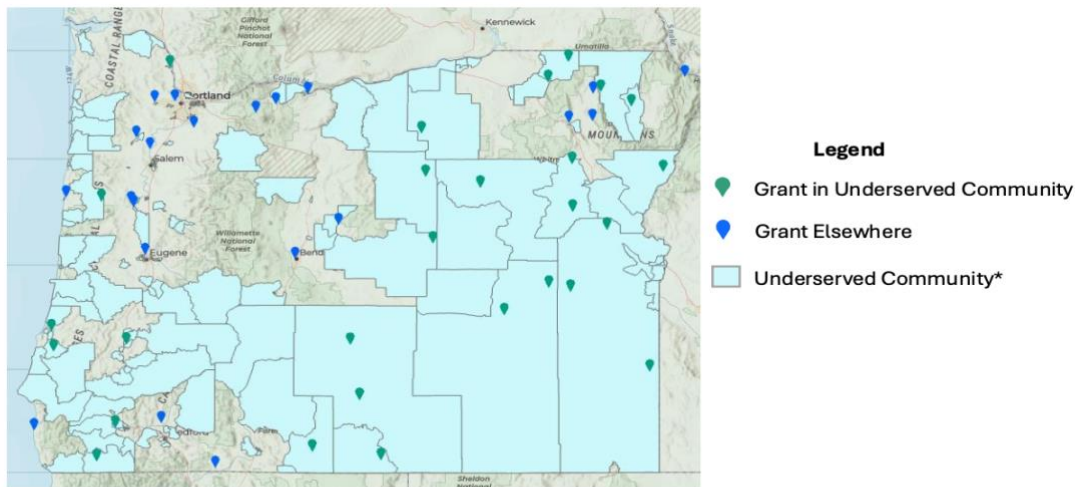
Natural and Working Lands Fund Allocation

Created by ODA in 2022, the Native Plant Conservation Workgroup is comprised of members from state, local, federal, nonprofit, and tribal partners. The purpose of the workgroup is to provide a forum to keep interested parties updated on program activities such as the status of the state list review and to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing. The workgroup met twice in 2024. ODA and other partners continued work on development and implementation of the Oregon Native Seed Strategy (ONSS) in 2024. Culturally significant plants and tribal nursery needs are addressed throughout the Strategy. ODA included \$100,000 of financial assistance to tribal nurseries and native plant programs supported by the Natural & Working Lands Fund. The funding will be distributed to the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon for native plant protection, restoration and production. ODA conducted various outreach to tribes regarding this opportunity, including a tribal listening session in October of 2024 to gather guidance on efficiently and equitably delivering these funds for maximum benefit to tribal recipients.

Noxious Weed Control Program

ODA's Noxious Weed Control Program works to protect Oregon's environment and economy by identifying, preventing, and managing invasive and harmful plant species. It aims to limit the spread of these noxious weeds through education, regulation, and on-the-ground management efforts. Each year, the program administers the Oregon State Weed Board Grant Program. The program distributes funding each biennium to support noxious weed work across the state. In 2024, the program performed an analysis of 2023 funding distribution and project support with respect to

environmental justice communities. In 2023, 55% (27) of the OSWB grants funded went to areas in underserved communities, and 53% (\$964,514) of the total funding was allocated in these communities (see attached map).



*Data from the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality

In 2024, the Noxious Weed Program began implementing a large-scale rangeland resilience project supported by the Natural and Working Lands Fund and federal funds. In recent years, the program has prioritized work with tribal partners and environmental justice communities whenever possible. The program hosted a special tribal luncheon in December 2024 as part of the biannual Interagency Noxious Weeds Symposium. The luncheon featured a facilitated conversation about the importance of storytelling in natural resource conservation and protection work.

Farm to School Program

The Farm to School Program (F2S) works to connect Oregon farmers, ranchers, seafood harvesters, and food processors with school cafeterias, early childcare centers, summer meal sites, and tribal meal programs. This enables more Oregon agricultural products to be served in the lunch line and helps connect youth to food production through school gardens, farm field trips, and grower visits to the classroom. More than 800 school gardens are supported by F2S funding across the state. These sites provide an educational setting to teach students about conservation, environmental stewardship, ecosystem habitats, and how to grow their own crops. The Farm to School Producer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant program provides funds for eligible equipment and infrastructure expenses to producers who intend to sell food produced or processed in Oregon to schools, early childcare centers, summer food program sponsors, and tribal meal programs. In 2024, ODA modified the Farm to School Producer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant to allow Tribal entities to receive funding for projects that provide native and first foods in tribally managed meal programs outside of USDA National School Meals Program.

ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES (ORS 182.550 SECTION 1)

ODA staff across all levels collaborate to find outreach and communication methods that enhance participation from diverse audiences. They also aim to identify potential impacts ODA's decisions may have on others during the public process. Staff regularly work with various partners including local, state, and federal agencies, organizations, community groups and well as ODA's Environmental Justice and Tribal Liaison (Citizen Advocate) to improve outreach, increase citizen involvement, and identify environmental justice communities. When presented with an EJ issue, ODA staff work with interested parties to address it. Although the Agency strives to address the needs and recommendations provided, ODA's ability to incorporate all suggestions is limited by its mandated authority.

Environmental Justice Consideration Process

Does the agency have a defined process for incorporating environmental justice factors into agency operations and decision-making?

ODA does not currently have a written, defined process for incorporating environmental justice factors into our agency operations and decision-making. However, ODA does adhere to the public outreach and engagement process, government-to-government tribal engagement and consultation, and encourages diverse groups and environmental justice representatives to be part of the Agency's board, commissions, committees, councils, and workgroups. Representation and having a voice provide an avenue for environmental justice considerations at the decision-making table. ODA also uses an equity lens when reviewing grant fund applications to elevate projects that benefit tribes and historically disadvantaged groups.

How does your agency keep track of environmental justice issues that have been identified?

Each program has its own system for identifying areas of concern or issues related to program activities and rules. Programs collaborate with their supervisor and program area director to address the issue. They also notify the Director's Office to ensure awareness and guidance when needed. If necessary, ODA's Citizen Advocate may work with programs to facilitate an acceptable resolution.

Environmental Justice Community Considerations

How does your agency define environmental justice communities?

ODA follows the definition of environmental justice communities found in [ORS 182.535 \(3\)](#).

What tools does your agency use to identify and prioritize environmental justice communities?

ODA uses a variety of resources to identify environmental justice communities, including the EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool ([EJScreen Tool](#)), Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool ([CEJST](#)), local canvassing, and knowledge from local, state and federal agencies, NGOs and other local organizations familiar with the area of activity. For example, after receiving feedback, ODA modified the Farm to School Producer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant to allow Tribal entities to receive funding for projects that provide native and first foods in tribally managed meal programs outside of USDA National School Meals Program.

In another example, ODA's Noxious Weed Program performed an analysis in 2024 of the 2023 funding distribution and project support with respect to environmental justice communities to better understand where allocation of funds and identify areas to focus on in future funding cycles. Rangeland Health Specialist were also hired in 2024 to prioritize working with tribal partners and tribally affiliated organizations wherever possible.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT (ORS 182.535 SECTION 2)

Community Outreach and Engagement

ODA continually seeks ways to increase outreach and engagement opportunities with Oregonians that are interested in or may be impacted by its decisions. The agency regularly engages with community-based organizations, private and public sectors, K-12 schools, higher education institutions, and other organizations to foster an inclusive environment. ODA staff attend meetings, county and state fairs, and conferences such as Future Farmers of America (FFA), to engage with citizens and expand access to work we do in the community. As part of the engagement process, ODA identifies and connects with partners, community members, and organizations when conducting rulemaking and related activities. Rules Advisory Committees (RACs) recruitments are intentionally targeted to create diverse representation. ODA's commitment to community engagement encompasses short-term and long-term initiatives.

ODA maintains long-standing relationships with many partners to engage with the public on rulemaking and activities associated with the agency. Below are a few examples of this work:

- ODA contracts with the Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) for interpretations services to allow staff to better serve customers whose first language is not English. This is an on-demand service allowing for real-time in the field language support.
- Implementation and utilization of the agency-wide Spanish phone line.
- Noxious Weed Control Program released their Priority Noxious Weed Grant materials in Spanish and English. This included the request for proposal announcement, complete application guidelines, application form, and budgetary documents.
- The Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program (IPPM) produced pest informational brochures were translated into Spanish and Russian to expand the audience receiving this information. The program recognizes these are groups that may normally not receive messages about invasive insect pests, but often work in industries (i.e., agricultural fields) where they may encounter these organisms.
- The Farm to School Program modified the Farm to School Producer Equipment and Infrastructure Grant to allow tribal entities to receive funding for projects that provide native and first foods in tribally managed meal programs outside of USDA National School Meals Program.
- Food Safety has fostered Tribal outreach through partnership with the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission. The Program continues to build relationships with tribal liaisons to encompass safe food practices and lanes of communication with roadside sales locations.

Public Engagement Policy and Processes

Does your agency have a public engagement process for promoting community participation in agency decision-making processes?

While ODA does not have a written policy on public engagement, staff use various practices when initiating outreach and engagement opportunities with the public for rulemaking and activities across the state. This includes coordinating with ODA staff, local, state, and federal agencies, NGOs, industry & environmental groups, and community partners to identify and encourage interested environmental justice communities to participate on rules advisory committees (RACs), hold public hearings during evenings and weekends as able, translate relevant documents to Spanish and other

languages as identified, and review, consider and respond to public comments received. Additionally, ODA encourages organizations, groups, and individuals to sign up for electronic notifications from relevant program areas. This helps them stay informed about upcoming activities.

Describe the current level and quality of public participation?

There is a wide variety of interested parties who participate in public engagement opportunities at ODA. Each program collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as NGOs and local community partners, to enhance outreach and engagement efforts, maximizing public participation. ODA has an expansive electronic notification system for program areas where individuals and interested parties can sign up to receive updates and upcoming public engagement opportunities. Advertisements and notifications are posted in quarterly newsletters, newspapers, and social media sites. Emphasis on identifying underserved communities is a regular part of the engagement process. Below are a couple of examples of recent public engagement processes programs engaged in:

- ODA has been actively conducting outreach and engagement with interested parties regarding significant changes to the Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) permitting process following the passage of [Senate Bill 85](#) in July 2023. Targeted outreach includes CAFO permittees and tribes in Oregon to discuss the rule changes that may impact them. In late December 2023, ODA sent a consultation letter to federally recognized tribes in Oregon. A follow-up email was sent in June 2024 to NRWG and CRC tribal contacts and key tribal staff with public notice and hearing information. Due to the broad impacts of the legislation on the permitting process and the new requirements, the CAFO program paused processing of new applications until the rulemaking was completed in September 2024. ODA also reached out to tribes regarding a process of how best to submit the proposed pre-application letters, which are required to be sent to all nine federally recognized tribes when an applicant is planning to submit a CAFO application. ODA initiated the proposed pre-application letter notification process to Oregon tribes in December 2024. Additionally, CAFO Program staff have also been actively conducting educational events to CAFO permittees around the state.
- Created by ODA in 2022, the Native Plant Conservation Workgroup is comprised of members from state, local, federal, nonprofit and tribal partners. The purpose of the workgroup is to provide a forum for keeping interested parties updated on program activities, such as the status of the state list review, and to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing. The workgroup met twice in 2024 with good participation. In partnership with several other state, federal, non-profit organizations, and tribes, ODA continued work on developing and implementing the Oregon Native Seed Strategy (ONSS) guidance document in 2024. Culturally significant plants and tribal nursery needs were considered and addressed throughout the ONSS. ODA also included \$100,000 of financial assistance to tribal nurseries and native plant programs in a 2024-2025 project supported by the Natural & Working Lands Fund through House Bill 3409. These funds distributed to the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon to advance tribal goals for native plant protection, restoration, and production. ODA conducted outreach to tribes on this opportunity, including hosting a tribal listening session in October of 2024 to get tribal guidance on the efficient and equitable delivery of these funds for maximum benefit to tribal recipients. Several tribes participated in the listening session and submitted their intent to utilize the funds.

Targeted Audiences

Has the agency performed a stakeholder analysis to determine the stakeholder groups impacted by agency decisions?

ODA has not performed an analysis to determine the groups impacted by agency decisions. However, ODA has had long-term relationships with people affected or interested in activities and rulemakings associated with ODA programs. ODA leadership, managers, and staff communicate with many of our partners on a regular basis to discuss ODA's rules and authority related to its work. ODA also emphasizes targeted outreach and engagement opportunities to tribes in Oregon and underserved communities to ensure meaningful involvement for those interested in participating.

With which stakeholders does your agency engage?

ODA engages with a wide variety of people including community-based organizations, private and public sectors, K-12 schools, higher education institutions, local, state, and federal agencies, tribal nations, environmental justice groups, industry groups and organizations, NGOs, and countless other organizations to foster an inclusive environment. ODA staff attend meetings, county and state fairs, and conferences such as Future Farmers of America (FFA) to engage with people interested in ODA's work. Many programs at ODA have unique and specific groups they regularly engage with. ODA programs also have electronic notifications systems (listservs) to inform people on program-specific work and ODA staff encourage people to sign up to stay up to date on program activities.

Public Engagement Policy

ODA does not currently have a Public Engagement Policy and would welcome guidance from the Environmental Justice Council on creating one.

Meaningful Engagement

What is the extent of meaningful engagement?

Meaningful engagement provides people the opportunity to be heard and engage with ODA on rulemaking and other activities that may impact them. It ensures robust outreach is conducted with potentially impacted individuals and groups. This process involves reflecting on actions being taken, assessing their impacts if known, and identifying meaningful solutions where able. Effective communication and listening are key, including explaining why or why not an action was taken. Ultimately, it involves fostering meaningful dialogue between ODA and interested parties.

Criteria

What criteria triggers public participation?

ODA is an open and transparent natural resource agency that encourages connecting with the public on our work and how we can improve our processes when issues arise. ODA initiates the public participation process for rulemaking and activities conducted by ODA staff, as outlined in statute and rules.

Follow-up

Does your agency follow-up with participants after decisions are made?

ODA staff regularly engage with, and respond to, partners on rulemaking and activities being conducted by the agency. This involves responding to inquiries from interested parties who contact ODA regarding a specific topic and have questions or concerns about the work we undertake.

AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACTS (ORS 182.550 SECTION 3)

Does your agency measure the impacts of agency decisions on environmental justice in Oregon communities? Why or why not?

ODA currently lacks measurement standards to comprehensively understand all the impacts our work may have on environmental justice communities in Oregon. However, the Agency actively works to address identified concerns or impacts within the limits of ODA's authority. For example, in January 2023, ODA invited tribes in Oregon to consult on policy development for pesticide licensing associated with individuals and corporations doing business for, or on behalf of a federally recognized tribe that engage in the application of pesticides upon the property of another, excluding "Indian country", as defined in federal law. This was in response to inquiries made the previous year that identified barriers to ODA's licensing authority on tribal sovereign nations. Concurrently, during the 2023 legislation session, [HB 2687](#) was introduced, and subsequently signed into law. This law grants ODA the authority to issue public applicator licenses to employees of federally recognized tribes in Oregon that apply pesticides on lands other than "Indian country" (as defined in law), such as "fee" lands. It also requires ODA to enter into a mutually acceptable agreement with a tribe before issuing or renewing a pesticide license. ODA added a tribal-related question to the online license renewal system and license application forms to comply with HB 2687. ODA continued outreach on this topic throughout 2024, including ODA Pesticide Licensing staff corresponding with multiple tribal representatives and pesticide applicators on how this may impact their pesticide application practices. ODA has successfully entered into a Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with an Oregon Tribe and one California Tribe doing business in Oregon. ODA continues to engage with other tribes that may be impacted by this change to identify an acceptable solution. This outreach also included identifying a pathway for tribal employees to obtain EPA credentials to conduct necessary pesticide applications on tribal land.

AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRESS (ORS 182.550 SECTION 4)

ODA strives to engage and include diverse perspectives on ODA-related boards, commissions, committees, councils, and workgroups. This includes members or representatives of environmental justice communities that have expressed interest in the topic or area being discussed. ODA plans to continue this practice. Ensuring diverse representation enhances our understanding of ODA statutes, rules, and policies, as well as their impact on different communities in Oregon. These groups play a vital role in identifying barriers and influencing necessary changes.

Some ODA programs track trends or issues that may help improve processes associated with ODA's authority and work to make improvements. For example, when EPA proposed relying more on online tools for access to regulatory requirements for pesticide applicators. The Pesticides Program advocated for alternative approaches by engaging with EPA and submitting comment letters to EPA voicing the challenges rural applicators with poor to no internet connections will face if they cannot access regulatory requirements primarily available online.

ODA is continually enhancing outreach efforts through language translation services. This includes routine translation of documents into Spanish and other languages, as well as the recruitment of bilingual staff. In 2024, ODA hired a full-time position for the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) who is bilingual in English and Spanish. The WPS position helps to enhance outreach and education efforts targeting marginalized groups and contribute to the promotion of health and safety for farmworkers.

As part of the Willamette Mercury sequestration grant (Focused Ag Solutions) between ODA and DEQ, environmental justice criteria are a priority in the selection of sub-basins for the implementation of this project. Outreach will include engagement with women-owned and Hispanic-owned farm/ranch operations, farmers and ranchers early in their career, and farmers and ranchers in rural communities. ODA's Spanish Translation Group will be used to create Spanish versions of outreach materials and will hire a translator, if requested, for events. Internet communication will be reviewed for accessibility for those with visual or hearing impairments.

ODA staff are increasing their network outreach by participating in culturally diverse conferences and celebrations, creating relationships to encourage engagement with underserved communities. This includes staff from several ODA programs participating in the Columbia River Indian Fishers conference held in July 2024, and in November 2024, the Pesticide Program staff participated at Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Spanish-language safety conference.

How is EJ built into agency strategic plans?

In June 2024, ODA updated its Strategic Plan (2024-2027). The Strategic Plan reaffirms the Agency's commitment to meaningful engagement, which is essential for understanding the diverse perspectives, interests, and identities of all people. This understanding is crucial to ODA's success. At the heart of ODA's mission is the question: "How do we eliminate barriers so all people in Oregon can thrive?" ODA's strategic plan includes strategies to engage communities, allocate resources equitably, and support those we serve. ODA believes that integrating the values of AGGIES into service enhancements, compliance activities, and strengthening our core work is vital for shaping a

resilient and equitable future. Click the link below to see a full version of ODA's current [Strategic Plan](#).

What does your agency need to further develop and implement environmental justice policies at the agency?

ODA's Strategic Plan identifies a list of necessary resources that will help support the Agency's efforts towards addressing environmental justice issues under its authority. The ODA EJ representative will continue to collaborate with ODA leadership and program managers to examine current environmental justice initiatives within the agency and identify areas for improvement. This includes opportunities for partnership and collaboration to improve community engagement efforts, systems for data collection and analysis to make informed decisions and identifying training needs and funding to sustain these efforts.

AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MAPPING TOOL INVOLVEMENT (ORS 182.550 SECTION 5)

How is your agency participating in the development of the environmental justice mapping tool?

ODA's environmental justice representative participates in the Environmental Justice Mapping Tool workgroup. The Agency is also actively engaged in creating and providing a list of data that is used or maintained by ODA to be considered for the EJ Mapping Tool.

AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT 2024

How would your agency like to engage with the EJC in 2025?

The Oregon Department of Agriculture appreciates the expertise of the EJC members and welcomes the opportunity to learn how to improve EJ at ODA. Below is a list of areas where ODA would welcome assistance in 2025:

- Identifying environmental justice communities, NGOs, and community organizations to improve outreach and engagement opportunities.
- Presentation and training opportunities for ODA staff to better understand EJ and how they can help to improve processes and engagement opportunities.
- Examples of environmental justice policy and public engagement process (policy) statements supported by EJC.
- Guidance to improve ODA's engagement and outreach initiatives.

AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COUNCIL LEGISLATION CITATIONS

The agency did not have any legislation from the last legislative session where EJC or EJ Task Force engagement is cited. However, the following summaries outline funding received that incorporates environmental justice considerations into ODA's work.

Natural and Working Lands Fund Allocation:

ODA, in partnership with several other state, federal, non-profit organizations, and tribes continued work on development and implementation of the Oregon Native Seed Strategy (ONSS) guidance document in 2024. Culturally significant plants and tribal nursery needs were considered and addressed throughout the Strategy. ODA also included \$100,000 of financial assistance to tribal nurseries and native plant programs in a 2024-2025 project supported by the Natural & Working Lands Fund through House Bill 3409. The funding will be used to distribute to the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon to advance tribal goals for native plant protection, restoration, and production. ODA conducted various outreach to tribes in Oregon on this opportunity, including a tribal listening session in October of 2024 to get tribal guidance on the efficient and equitable delivery of these funds for maximum benefit to tribal recipients. Several tribes participated in the listening session and submitted their intent to utilize the funds. Additionally, in 2024, the Noxious Weed Program began implementing a large-scale rangeland resilience project supported by the Natural & Working Lands Fund and federal funds. This project created two new Rangeland Health Specialists (RHS). These staff will prioritize working with tribal partners and tribally affiliated organizations wherever possible.

AGENCY MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT RELATED LEGISLATION

How do agencies collaborate when multiple agencies are listed?

ODA leadership and program managers regularly engage with other state natural resource agencies to collaborate and coordinate actions and responses to legislation related to our shared work. Collaboration includes developing and coordinating workgroups, rulemaking advisory committees (RACs), outreach and engagement strategies, and conducting regularly scheduled meetings when needed.

ODA leadership advises and assigns program staff where needed and connects them to the appropriate staff at other agencies to coordinate the work necessary to complete the mandate. ODA regularly works with several state agencies on a variety of work. One example is the coordinated work with several state agencies to complete the Nitrate Reduction Plan for the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA). In September 2024, the [Oregon Nitrate Reduction Plan](#) for the LUBGWMA was released in partnership with the Governor's Office, DEQ, ODA, WRD, and OHA. The plan details the state's key strategies to reduce groundwater nitrate concentrations and address public health.

DEFINITIONS

Environmental Justice: (ORS 182.535 Section 3)

“Environmental justice” means the equal protection from environmental and health risks, fair treatment and meaningful involvement in decision making of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, immigration status, income or other identities with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn and practice spirituality and culture.

Environmental Justice Community: (ORS 182.535 Section 4)

“Environmental justice community” includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, tribal communities, rural communities, remote communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.

Meaningful Involvement: (ORS 182.535 Section 7)

“Meaningful involvement” means:

- (a) Members of vulnerable populations have appropriate opportunities to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment or health;
- (b) Public involvement can influence a decision maker’s decision;
- (c) The concerns of all participants involved are considered in the decision-making process; and
- (d) Decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of members of vulnerable populations.

Environmental Burdens: (ORS 182.535 Section 2)

“Environmental burden” means the environmental and health risks to communities caused by the combined historic, current and projected future effects of:

- (a) Exposure to conventional pollution and toxic hazards in the air or in or on water or land;
- (b) Adverse environmental conditions caused or made worse by other contamination or pollution; and
- (c) Changes in the environment resulting from climate change, such as water insecurity, drought, flooding, wildfire, smoke and other air pollution, extreme heat, loss of traditional cultural resources or foods, ocean acidification, sea-level rise and increases in infectious disease.

APPENDIX

House Bill 4077 (2022)

Legislation establishing the Environmental Justice Council, the Council's responsibility to develop an environmental justice mapping tool, develop a biannual report to the Governor, and the requirement for natural resource agencies to submit an annual report to the Environmental Justice Council.

Senate Bill 420 (2007)

Legislation establishing the Environmental Justice Task Force, the predecessor for the Environmental Justice Council. It also includes requirements for the Task Force to submit biannual reports to the Governor and the requirement for natural resource agencies to submit an annual report to the Environmental Justice Task Force.

ORS 182.550 Reports by natural resource agencies

All directors of natural resource agencies, and other agency directors as the Governor may designate, shall report annually to the Environmental Justice Task Force and to the Governor on the results of the agencies' efforts to:

1. Address environmental justice issues;
2. Increase public participation of individuals and communities affected by agencies' decisions;
3. Determine the effect of the agencies' decisions on environmental justice communities;
4. Improve plans to further the progress of environmental justice in Oregon; and
5. Utilize the environmental justice mapping tool developed under section 12 of this 2022 Act.