

A non-profit coalition working to advance science-based policies that promote innovative, responsible use of modern tools – including pesticides, fertilizers, and biotechnology – to strengthen food and fiber security, protect public health, and promote environmental stewardship.

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To Oregon Board of Agriculture and Director Charpilloz-Hanson,

On behalf of Oregonians for Food and Shelter (OFS), the following comments address the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) 2025-27 program prioritization and proposed budget reduction options. Our feedback is rooted in our mission to advance science-based policies that promote the responsible use of modern agricultural tools while protecting the economic viability of Oregon's natural resource sector.

### *Comments on Program Prioritization*

OFS believes that prioritization should be strictly based on program impacts and achievements. We suggest the following adjustments to the current rankings:

- **Pesticide Analytical Response Center (PARC):** Currently ranked as Priority #11, we believe this program should be moved further down the list. The cost of this program is disproportionately high compared to its utility and impact, particularly regarding the high cost per call into the 211 system based on call averages. There is plenty of opportunity for agency coordination on relevant pesticide incidents without the significant budget impact.
- **Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP):** This program is currently Priority #33. OFS has significant concerns regarding the PSP due to the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) continued disregard for established scientific processes in data collection and interpretation. Biased and flawed methods used by DEQ have led to false conclusions that misdirect program spending and disconnect data from meaningful outreach. Until these scientific integrity issues are addressed, it should not be considered a high-priority program.
- **Predator Control and Wolf Assistance Grants:** These programs, currently ranked as Priority #36 and #37 respectively, provide vital benefits to the agricultural community by mitigating economic losses caused by predatory animals. These programs are essential for the economic viability and sustainability of Oregon's livestock producers and should be moved up in priority.
- **Agency Modernization:** Listed as a critical investment but not assigned a standard rank, this effort aims to unify fragmented data and deploy modern systems to improve operational efficiency and customer service. OFS views this as critical to serving stakeholders more effectively and urges the ODA to move this higher on the priority list to realize the benefits of new processes and ideas.



### *Comments on Reduction Options*

Regarding the proposed budget reductions, OFS offers the following recommendations to protect the natural resource sector:

- Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) Reform: While we agree the PSP is currently a lower priority, we advocate for retaining the program at a reduced budget, with all funding redirected to the ODA to cover essential lab and coordinator costs. By eliminating DEQ's portion of the PSP budget, the state can revitalize the program and move away from the unscientific analysis methods that have misaligned the program with real-world impacts, and eroded industry trust. This shift would deliver accurate data reporting that can be directly integrated into education and outreach.
- Retaining Agricultural Water Quality Grants: The current reduction options include the elimination of all grant funding for water quality improvements. OFS strongly opposes this. These grants are critical for funding on-the-ground projects that address agricultural water quality issues across the state. Removing this support would limit the ability of farmers and ranchers to comply with state standards and protect water quality.

In summary, a resilience framework for Oregon must treat working land stewards as essential partners. Prioritizing programs with proven achievements and maintaining critical grants like those for water quality is essential for a future where science and innovation empower Oregon's producers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Murray".

Katie Murray, Executive Director, Oregonians for Food & Shelter