February 4, 2015

Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair  
Representative Peter Buckley, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
H-178, State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Devlin and Representative Buckley:

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 help 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, and many other environmental quality and economic development issues facing Oregonians across the state.

Over the last decade, in each legislative session, these programs have faced budget proposals from the Governor that would close facilities and reduce personnel. And each session, with your assistance and leadership, the legislature has stepped in to recover these programs. Unfortunately the Governor’s proposal for the 2015-17 biennium, with a nominal 3% increase for the biennium, again holds the programs at a level of funding that does not meet their acknowledged cost increases.
We deeply appreciate the support you and your colleagues have provided over the years. You know how the Statewide Programs can help the whole state overcome the vexing challenge of bridging the economic divide between urban and rural Oregon. But the OSU Statewides are at a crossroad.

This year, with the help and support of a wide variety of interest groups and stake holders, the OSU Board of Trustees developed a comprehensive proposal to add $16 million in new and redesigned programs aimed at making progress toward economic prosperity in every corner of the state. Because the newly-appointed Higher Education Coordinating Commission focused its efforts on the education elements of the universities and community colleges, it did not consider the research and economic missions of the universities. As a result, the HECC did not address the Statewides in its recommended budget to the Governor.

The Governor has indicated a top priority for meeting the needs of Oregonians in every corner of the state. The Statewides are a key component in achieving this mission. We hope that you will join us in addressing a number of unsolved environmental, social, and economic challenges that are robbing all Oregonians of their potential. These include:

- **Water Quality and Quantity** – The Statewide Programs help rural and urban communities develop strategies to increase water availability for agriculture, reduce water pollution in surface and ground water, and address changes to coastal water quality.

- **Sustainable Management of Working Landscapes** – Much of Oregon’s productivity comes from its forests, farms, and nearby ocean. The Statewide Programs work with landowners and industries to help sustain these working landscapes. They help create practical approaches to eradicate invasive species, manage for at-risk species like marbled murrelet and sage-grouse, and support agricultural production from coast to high desert.

- **Public Health, Food Safety and Security** – The Statewide Programs help to ensure that Oregon families have what they need to live healthy lives. These programs include the full spectrum of food issues, from breeding new crops and developing food safety practices, to teaching family nutrition and promoting community health.

- **Business Development and Value Added Manufacturing** – The Statewide Programs provide knowledge and outreach to re-establish and grow resource-based, globally competitive industries in Oregon’s rural communities. They support private sector development and investment in new technologies that drive value-added agricultural, seafood, and forestry products that are made in Oregon and that create family wage jobs in rural communities where they are needed the most.

We look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months to make meaningful progress in a bi-partisan approach that addresses the needs of both urban and rural Oregonians in every corner of the state.

Sincerely,

Katie Fast, Vice President Public Policy
Oregon Farm Bureau

Angela Crowley-Koch, Legislative Director
Oregon Environmental Council
Kelly Ross, Legislative Representative  
* Agricultural Cooperative Council of Oregon *

Jim Geisinger, Executive Vice President  
* Associated Oregon Loggers *

Jason Hunton, President  
* Oregon Seed League *

Mark Schmidlin, President  
* Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association *

Tim Butler, Chairman  
* Oregon Essential Oil Growers *

Zach Krahmer, Chairman  
* Oregon Blueberry Commission *

Guy Lewis, Chairman  
* Oregon Ryegrass Commission *

Macey Wessels, Chair  
* Oregon Tall Fescue Commission *

Zach Taylor, Chairman  
* Oregon Fine Fescue Commission *

Dawsen Koos, Chairman  
* Oregon Clover Commission *

Mark Hagman, Chairman  
* Oregon Mint Commission *

Sara Vickerman, Senior Director  
* Defenders of Wildlife *

Gary Thompson, President  
* Association of Oregon Counties *

Dylan Kruse, Policy Director  
* Sustainable Northwest *

Greg Block, VP Conservation Finance & External Affairs  
* Wild Salmon Center *

Will Wise, Chief Executive Officer  
* Oregon Beef Council *

Blake Rowe, Chief Executive Officer  
* Oregon Wheat Growers League *

Dan Saltzman, Commissioner  
* City of Portland *
Ian Tolleson, Government Affairs Director
Northwest Food Processors Association

Tim Danowski, Executive Director
Oregon Winegrowers Association