



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 6, 2019

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon, Co-Chairs
Members of the Committee

Email: jwmnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: **HB 5002** – Dept. of Agriculture budget – **Comments**

The League has strong positions related to protecting agricultural lands, to assuring abundant clean water for all, assuring our public facilities are not damaged by invasive species (which would cost us all millions) and that government has the responsibility for public safety. Just like other state public safety programs, our food safety programs are critical to Oregonians' health and wellbeing.

We support Policy Option Packages (POPs) #240 and 260 to upgrade their laboratory equipment and other laboratory needs. This agency is responsible for measuring a number of important public safety issues. Our belief in accurate data leads us to support these requests.

We support POP #380 to provide \$100,000 to support the Invasive Species Council. Curbing invasive species is a very real economic issue for both private business and public entities.

Of special importance is POP #090 where our natural resource agencies have determined that the state should fund one state grant coordinator to work on all their behalves is a huge step toward continued and improved multi-agency collaboration. The League supports such efforts and looks forward to seeing more such ideas come before the Legislature.

Although there are other POPs we might support, we are focusing on these. We again encourage this Committee to use the Key Performance Measures as you consider what items to fund.

We are pleased that the agency is working to align with their Strategic Plan recently adopted. But we continue to be frustrated by the agency's missing the mark on their water quality Key Performance Measure (KPM) #12 where 2 of the 3 data sets have decreased. For agriculture, for all Oregonians, clean water is critical. We must find ways to increase success. If the POPs on water quality monitoring will help, then we can support. Taking a serious look at how the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program is working should be considered.

KPM #6 is a heartening improvement in the agency taking pesticide investigations seriously. We look forward to continued work in this area.

KPM #9 measures agriculture jobs. One wonders if the decrease in these numbers relates to the increase in mechanical or robotic operations. If so, we need to address these employment changes in our rural communities. Again, this is a cross-agency issue and not just a concern for this agency.

Lastly, the League commends you to advocate for **HB 2672**, which authorizes the Dept. of Revenue to reimburse the Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Energy and Water Resources Dept. for expenses incurred in administration and enforcement of activities related to cannabis. Each of these agencies has been impacted by the regulation surrounding the marijuana program.

Responsibilities related to the cannabis program have not been considered in previous budgets for these agencies, yet the impact is significant without additional funding having been provided.

League members enjoy the bounty provided by the wide variety of Oregon's commodities. Oregon agriculture is the most stable of Oregon's economies. We encourage the Legislature to support the work of this agency and consider our comments as you develop the final budgets for our natural resource agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Norman Turrill
LWVOR President



Peggy Lynch
LWVOR Natural Resources Coordinator

Cc: Dept. of Agriculture Director Alexis Taylor (ataylor@oda.state.or.us)
Representative John Lively, Chair, House Committee on Economic Development