

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 8, 2017

Ryan Zinke, Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We are writing to urge the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to continue allocation of resources to Agreement No. L17AC00179 with the Oregon Department of Agriculture for its Strategic Integrated Noxious Weed Management partnership program for 2018. This agreement is a continuation of a 40-year partnership between the federal government and the state Department of Agriculture to conserve and restore healthy landscapes and waterways threatened by noxious weeds. It is our understanding that the BLM contract would be \$290,000 for 2018. Further, we understand that in past administrations, the state BLM director had authority to sign the agreement, but now the authority resides at the Department of Interior.

The current Oregon project agreement was only partially funded in the amount of \$70,000. Failure to continue a fully-funded agreement puts ranchers' grazing allotments in jeopardy, could affect critical invasive plant work on federal lands in Oregon and protects adjoining private lands and our agricultural economy.

Oregon's noxious weed program provides assistance with weed control on federal lands, including education and outreach, prevention, physical and mechanical treatments, biological agents, herbicides, cultural methods including targeted grazing, and replanting. Constituents have informed us of the importance of the program's early detection and rapid response work, for instance, to control infestations of flowering rush that threaten anadromous fish habitat on the Columbia River.

As you are well aware, failing to manage and control the spread of invasive, noxious weeds can lead to long-term economic and ecological losses. This project continues a long-term partnership that is highly beneficial to rural agricultural producers and the environment.

We very much appreciate your immediate attention to ensuring this important project continues its work, and the agreement is fully funded.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator