

## OREGON FARM BUREAU

# Ag successful in 2017 session

The primary mission of Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is to give farm and ranch families a strong, unified voice in the legislature. Our grassroots membership is what allows OFB to have professional, dedicated staff advocating tirelessly for agriculture in Salem and Washington D.C., so members can focus on raising crops and animals.

OFB staff also works in tandem with Farm Bureau volunteers, helping ag producers connect with lawmakers and explain how proposed legislation would impact their ability to stay in business. Thanks to this cohesive, cooperative effort, agriculture emerged largely successful from the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session.

The session began in February with a \$1.8 billion budget shortfall, and Democrat majorities set their sights on a corporate tax increase to fill the budget hole. Agriculture was at the forefront of the tax debates, as legislators considered levying new taxes on farm and forest land, farm equipment, and gross sales. The ag community was quick to organize in opposition — and each of these proposals failed.

OFB also helped to defeat a \$200 million tax increase that would've targeted the smallest farm and ranch businesses.

Taxation wasn't the only hot-button issue this session. Family farmers also faced threats in the capitol on employment, land use, production methods, and environmental issues. And each time, the ag and forestry communities came together to defeat harmful policies.

## Zinke, FB members discuss Antiquities Act

On July 15, U.S. Secretary of the Interior **Ryan Zinke** visited the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon to fulfill his promise to review overuse of the federal Antiquities Act, which gives the sitting president the power to proclaim large swaths of publicly owned land as national monuments, bringing in a host of new restrictions and drastically limiting its productive use.

In January 2017, the previous administration expanded the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument by 48,000 acres, despite public outcry from local farm, ranch, and timber families who've worked the land for generations.

Congressman **Greg Walden**, OFB President **Barry Bushue**, and Jackson County Farm Bureau members **Dalton Straus** and **Lee Bradshaw** were among the group accompanying the secretary on a tour of the region, explaining how the monument



From left are OFB Director of Public Policy Jenny Dresler and Farm Bureau members Brenda Frketich, Macey Wessels, and Matt Frketich at the state capitol to fight a proposal to eliminate farm use assessments.

"We're proud of these accomplishments, and Farm Bureau members should be too," said Jenny Dresler, OFB director of state public policy. "This session's victories were possible because of the tireless efforts of our active volunteer leaders and the larger ag coalition engaging proactively in Salem. We thank everyone who participated."

Following are some highlights from the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session. For the full session summary, visit [oregonfb.org](http://oregonfb.org).

## Bills That Passed

**HB 2017, Transportation Package:** Passed during the last days of session, HB 2017 increases taxes on fuel, vehicles, and bicycles to fund transportation infrastructure improvements across the state. Revenue is allocated to ODOT, counties, and cities with a portion dedicated to rural communities. The bill proposes tolling on I-5 and I-205 as a way to raise funds.

**HB 3249, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program:** Creates the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP). The program provides funding to create a new set of tools for landowners to support working farms and ranches, while also providing conservation benefits on those lands. *OFB supported, bill passed.*

**SB 299, Oregon Sick Time Fixes:** Provides important clarifications to family farmers and businesses in implementing the paid sick time law. Fixes include: piece-rate pay calculations, employee count, and farm stand location. *OFB supported, bill passed.*

**SB 828, Predictable Scheduling:** SB 828 was amended significantly to require seven-day notice of scheduling for businesses with 500 or more employees in retail, food service, or hospitality. Although Oregon will be the first state to have a mandated scheduling policy, the final product was negotiated by a business coalition to exclude all seasonal-based industries, including ag. *OFB neutral, bill passed.*

**HB 2038, Farm-to-School:** Allocates \$4.5 million in funding to Farm-to-School and School Garden programs. This appropriation will preserve the program for the 2017-2019 biennium. *OFB supported, bill passed.*

**HB 2066, Bovine Manure Tax Credit:** Part of a larger tax credit package, HB 2066 caps use of the manure digester tax credit at \$5 million annually and ensures that farms of all sizes would be able to qualify for the credit. *OFB supported, bill passed.*

**HB 2785, Wetlands Jurisdiction:** Prohibits the Department of State Lands from levying significant fines against farmers who constructed barns and homes in farm fields. *OFB supported, bill passed.*

**SB 327, Recreation Liability:** Protects landowners and their employees from lawsuits by people recreating on their land. *OFB supported, bill passed.*

**SB 644, Eastern Oregon Mining Exemption:** Creates a new statewide process for siting large-scale mineral mines in seven Eastern Oregon counties. The new process contains inadequate protections for neighboring farms and ranches that could be impacted by the mine. *OFB opposed, bill passed.*

## Bad Bills Killed

**HB 2859, Farm & Forest Assessments:** Eliminated personal property tax exemptions for farm and forest equipment and farm and forest deferrals in 2024. *OFB opposed, bill died.*

**HB 2060, Small Business Tax Increase:** Disqualified S-Corps and Partnerships with less than 10 employees from the small business tax cut that passed during the 2013 Special Session.

*OFB opposed, bill died.*

**HB 2705, Water Measurement:** Required mandatory measurement devices on all non-exempt water rights, based on the "best practicable technology and practices available." Measurement devices would've been required at each point of diversion and all water use would've been reported to the department. *OFB opposed, bill died.*

**HB 2706, New Water Tax:** Imposed an annual tax of \$100 for each water right held in the state. *OFB opposed, bill died.*

**HB 3087, Employer-Paid Family Leave:** Levied 0.5% payroll tax on employers and workers to provide three months of paid family and medical leave to ALL employees, including an additional six weeks of parental leave. *OFB opposed, bill died.*

**SB 197, Dairy Air Regulations:** Required DEQ to undertake rulemaking to regulate air quality from dairy confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) of all sizes. *OFB opposed, bill died.*

**SB 499/ SB 500, Pesticides:** SB 499 removed pesticides from Right-to-Farm protection and exposed farmers to frivolous lawsuits. SB 500 eliminated the requirement to submit a timely "report of loss" form to the ODA, removing the opportunity for fact finding before a potential lawsuit. *OFB opposed, bills died.*

**SB 785, Animal Antibiotics:** Prohibited the use of antibiotics for any nontherapeutic purposes, including some medical purposes in food-producing animals. It also created conflicting federal and state regulations, required annual reporting of the use of any medical antibiotics used on food animals, and put Oregon food producers at a competitive disadvantage. *OFB opposed, bill died.*

**SB 1008, California Diesel Mandate:** Imposed provisions of California's Truck & Bus Regulation on Oregon businesses. Before it was amended, the bill increased registration fees for off-road vehicles and required significant investments in diesel particulate retrofits or in new trucks for on- and off-road fleets. The bill was amended to apply to only the retrofitting and replacement of school bus fleets. *OFB opposed original bill; amended version passed.*



On July 15, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke (third from left) toured the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument with a group including (from left) OFB President Barry Bushue, Rep. Greg Walden, and Jackson County Farm Bureau members Lee Bradshaw (foreground) and Dalton Straus (right).

expansion impacts the local community without providing any meaningful public benefit.

Farm Bureau members have been national leaders against overuse of the Antiquities Act, most recently by helping avoid a new monument designation in Malheur County.

OFB strongly supports rewriting the act to revoke the president's ability to designate national monuments. Only Congress

— with the approval of state and local governments — should have that level of power.

On April 26, **President Trump** signed Executive Order 13792, which ordered the review of national monuments made since 1996, particularly when the designation or expansion occurred without adequate public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

## Upcoming events

Visit [oregonfb.org](http://oregonfb.org) for more information.

**Aug. 26** Century Farm & Ranch Program award ceremony at Oregon State Fair

**Aug. 29** Young Farmers & Ranchers FFA Tractor Driving Contest at Oregon State Fair

**Aug. 30–Sept. 1** OFB booth at Oregon State Fair

**Sept. 28** OFB Classic Golf Tourney in Oregon City

**Oct.–Nov.** County Farm Bureau Annual Meetings

**Dec. 5–7** OFB Annual Meeting in Pendleton