



15 May 2020

**To:** Western SARE Administrative Council

**RE: Stakeholder letter of support for the Western SARE pre-proposal entitled, "Development of late blight forecasting model for Washington State"**

Dear Western SARE Administrative Council,

This letter is to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal entitled, "Development of late blight forecasting model for Washington State." The Northwest Potato Research Consortium is a cooperative effort in research funding by the state potato commissions in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. all of which are funded solely through assessments on our potato farmers. The potato industry of the Northwest accounts for over 50% of all potatoes produced in the U.S. The main aim of the Consortium is to increase cooperation and efficiency of the research programs funded by the three potato commissions that total about \$2 million annually.

I have worked in potato commission program management for 21 years. My core activities have been managing a grant program and associated review process, and providing outputs from research and other information to our stakeholders and their partners (e.g. through our website, <https://www.nwpotatoresearch.com/>). I have edited a grower-outreach newsletter called *Potato Progress* for 20 years and created much web and print content aimed at educating farmers. Through these years I have collaborated closely with university personnel in communicating pest management recommendations and situation reports to industry via hotlines, newsletters, emails, and websites.

Late blight forecasting and associated management recommendations are essential to our producers. Late blight is a disease that cannot be effectively controlled once an outbreak has started, and one that is rapidly transmitted among farms through wind-blown spores. It is important, therefore, that the producer community and Extension work together in late blight management so that forecasting models and management recommendations can be tailored to specific conditions. The state potato commissions I work for have supported late blight forecasting and research since the 1990s and consider the continuation and improvement of this work to be high priority. The outputs planned in this proposal represent substantial advancement in late blight management for our region.

In short, I truly encourage this work and hope this proposal will be funded. Please let me know if I might help or answer any questions as this proposal goes through review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Jensen".

Andrew Jensen, Ph.D.

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