



NETWORK of OREGON  
WATERSHED COUNCILS

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Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
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### **Support for HB 5048 & HB 5049**

The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils supports the efforts of over 80 watershed councils statewide that work collaboratively to enhance watershed health and benefit their local communities. OWEB programs provide resources and support that have enabled councils to forge relationships with landowners and other partners that result in local, grass roots watershed restoration. These partnerships rely on local knowledge and resources, resulting in unique solutions that fit the local context. This grass roots approach ultimately helps build the relationships and trust needed for long-term restoration with landscape-scale impacts.

Councils have a long track record of working with partners—including soil and water conservation districts, land trusts, and other community organizations—to achieve positive ecological, economic, and social impacts statewide. These benefits are derived from strategic partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, other conservation organizations, and private foundations that enable councils to leverage funding and resources to have broad-reaching impacts. In many cases, restoration work also has positive economic impact for local communities.

In addition to their ecological and social benefits, OWEB-supported restoration projects also create living classrooms that councils, conservation districts, and their partners are using to engage youth in place-based education and service learning programs. These projects also benefit outreach that targets the general public, as well as university programs and researchers.

As OWEB engages councils in conversation about its long-term investment strategy, councils are starting new discussions about how they can work together to share resources, put larger projects on the ground, and develop more comprehensive monitoring programs. Leadership provided by OWEB staff has been an important catalyst for these discussions.

The funding provided by HB 5048 and HB 5049 provides the resources and support that councils and their partners leverage to achieve the Oregon Plan's goals for enhancing watershed health and providing positive benefits to local communities.