



March 7, 2015

Chair Edwards and Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Members

Re: SB 847

As the executive director of The Wetlands Conservancy, a thirty four year old non-profit with a mission of conserving Oregon's wetlands, I urge you to **not pass SB 847** out of committee.

Wetlands are vital to the health of our environment in so many ways. Like kidneys, **they absorb, filter and recirculate our water**. In addition, they provide **critical fish and wildlife habitat** to so many of the iconic species we identify with Oregon. In the face of destructive floods, they serve as **natural buffers helping to protect our communities**. With the heightened awareness around limited water resources, **their role in cleaning and recharging our water supply** has become even more essential.

This bill will allow easier conversion of prior converted wetlands to non-agricultural use with very little evaluation. The ability of agricultural wetlands including some prior converted acres to hold and retain water saved parts of Baton Rouge, New Orleans, cities in the Willamette Valley during large flood events over the past five years. Removal of DSL review and evaluation may allow transition of pervious surfaces to impervious with no review of possible negative consequences to community flood control and management as a result of the conversions. **Please do not pass this bill out of your committee.**

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