



May 15, 2015

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Tobias Read, Co-Chair
Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature

Support for HB 5030 & The Clean Water Fund

The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC) and Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) work in partnership to support the efforts of nearly 90 watershed councils (councils) and 45 soil and water conservation districts (districts) statewide. We collectively support bonds for OWEB Package 502, which – as amended by the Governor’s Office – would provide revenue for the Clean Water Fund. The Clean Water Fund is an integral component of SB 204-A, which has received broad support and is currently before the Joint Committee on Ways & Means. We also encourage the Subcommittee’s support of bonds proposed under HB 5030 that would fund Water Resources Department (WRD) programs, which also have a positive impact on watershed enhancement.

About Districts and Councils

Districts, councils, and their partners are the primary infrastructure for implementing a substantial amount of the non-regulatory conservation and restoration work statewide. Agencies like OWEB have no dedicated restoration staff, while ODA and DEQ rely on us as non-regulatory partners that can provide technical assistance to private landowners. Councils and districts bring together broad community interests, and leverage relationships with private landowners, to build projects that have landscape-scale impacts. We leverage state and federal funding with private contributions and in-kind community support to implement conservation on both private and public lands. Much of the work we do supports and creates local jobs in a restoration economy.

Clean Water Fund (SB 204) – OWEB Package 502 (Amended)

The Clean Water Fund would provide important resources to complement and expand existing tools for conservation in riparian (streamside) areas, particularly on agricultural lands. Districts and councils have long matched OWEB funding with USDA-sponsored Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) dollars for riparian restoration. The proposed Fund would augment this program, allowing districts and councils to build projects with more longevity and greater ecological uplift. The Clean Water Fund would support longer-term riparian protection and enhancement measures, including planting trees and shrubs that provide shade, retain soils, and filter contaminants, as well as off-channel improvements such as erosion control. The Fund also includes provisions for long-term maintenance contracts to ensure the viability of these investments into the future. Collectively, these programs support jobs in rural communities, and help agricultural producers and small woodland owners maintain productivity while supporting landscape-scale water quality improvements that benefit the State.



Water Resources Department Bonds

Councils and districts also play an important role in facilitating the implementation of various water conservation and efficiency programs that benefit agricultural producers and rural communities. Many of these grant and loan programs are administered by the Water Resources Department. HB 5030 includes funding for WRD's Water Supply Development Account, Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage Investment Fund, and Water Supply Fund. We encourage the Subcommittee's support of these line items, which will provide revenue for valuable community water development, conservation, and reuse programs that impact large portions of the State.

We appreciate your time and consideration,

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