

AOC Supports SB 1517A-6

Problem

In Tillamook County there is an ongoing discussion about finding a balance between wetland restoration and maintaining an optimum level of land dedicated to farm activity. The County is seeking authorization to create and implement a collaborative process to facilitate local input and involvement in restoration projects that are sited in the County.

Solution

SB 1517A addresses this issue by creating three primary provisions:

1. It gives Tillamook County the option for local approval of wetlands projects sited in exclusive farm use zones to ensure that the project will not adversely impact nearby prime agricultural operations.
2. It allows Tillamook County to create a collaborative process that a project applicant may choose to use to achieve agreement regarding conditions necessary to protect neighboring important agricultural operations while still achieving the benefits of desired wetland restoration.
3. It authorizes Tillamook County to enter into a planning process involving a diverse group of stakeholders that will allow the County to more effectively plan priority areas for wetland restoration and priority areas for the maintenance of prime agricultural operations.

Pilot Project

The 10 year pilot project will help other counties from around the state learn from Tillamook's experience of developing a collaborative process that should ease the tensions between the interests of farmers and the need for wetland restoration. AOC has worked closely with the Governor's office to develop the language in SB 1517A-6 to ensure that concerns from all parties have been addressed. Additionally, the State has shown interest in finding resources to for Tillamook County to find resources to support its planning effort.

AOC urges your support for SB 1517A-6. For further information, please contact Mark Nystrom (mnystrom@oregoncounties.org/541-968-9961).