



April 7, 2017

Senator Lew Fredrick, Co-Chair  
Representative Brad Witt, Co-Chair  
Ways and Means Sub Committee On Natural Resources

### Support of HB 5040

Land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and watershed councils work with willing landowners to accomplish voluntary conservation and restoration across Oregon. The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), and Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC) **together represent 160 conservation organizations** that work together to conserve Oregon's natural heritage. **Our three organizations support 5040**, that provides funding for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats for future generations.

As one of the primary agencies dedicated to protecting, restoring and improving clean water and fish and wildlife habitat, OWEB plays a critical role in our state. The Agency relies on a strong network of local conservation organizations to identify opportunities, and partner with landowners to restore riparian areas, improve water quality and monitor ecological outcomes over time. OWEB's grant program is unique in the nation because it supports conservation organizations that work from the ground up to achieve statewide goals included in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

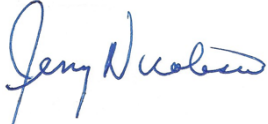
Behind every restoration and acquisition project supported by OWEB are local organizations that implement investments on the ground. OWEB provides critical capacity grants to support the organizational infrastructure needed to facilitate watershed and habitat restoration and conservation projects. Through responsive grants, organizations can take action on restoration and land protection priorities to address their community's natural resource needs.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts implement projects with willing land owners to address agriculture water quality and endangered species issues. OWEB's support for Districts through the Oregon Department of Agriculture enabled the development of thirteen Strategic Implementation Areas and fifty Focus Areas across the state. OWEB's significant support to Districts resulted in a no-list decision for sage grouse by the USFWS while keeping farmers and ranchers in business.

Land trusts leverage OWEB funding with private and federal funding sources to ensure the long-term stewardship of lands. Land trusts standards and practices require long-term care for easements and acquisitions, ensuring OWEB's investments are benefiting Oregonians in perpetuity.

OWEB's grant program has demonstrated results on the ground. Over its nineteen-year existence, the Agency has evolved to address larger landscapes and more complex issues that provide direct benefit to current and future Oregonians. We enthusiastically support HB 5040.

We appreciate your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerry Nicolescu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jerry Nicolescu, Executive Director, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelley Beamer". The signature is cursive and elegant, with the first name being the most prominent part.

Kelley Beamer, Executive Director, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn Morford". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most prominent part.

Shawn Morford, Interim Executive Director, Network of Oregon Watershed Councils