



Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative, Brad Witt, Co-Chair  
Joint Sub-Committee on Natural Resources

RE: House Bill 5040  
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

The Oregon Association of Conservation District (OACD) is testifying in support of HB 5040, the funding legislation for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

OACD represents the forty-five Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across Oregon. Every SWCD in Oregon currently benefits from their individual and collective relationships with OWEB. SWCDs receive funding through various program abilities provided by OWEB; capacity funding, competitive open solicitation grants, and Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) opportunities. These opportunities provide SWCDs the ability to participate in and leverage other state and federal programs which in turn provide significant conservation and restoration benefits to the state's natural resources.

Capacity funding in the last year provided Districts the ability to be in contact with or provide technical assistance to approximately 17,000 landowners. The contacts provided for 1260 approved conservation plans covering approximately 112,000 acres, from which 1305 water quality projects were developed effecting 63,525 acres. Districts individually or in partnership with other entities provided for 885 outreach and engagement opportunities.

OWEB's early funding and current FIP program support to Districts in eastern Oregon to address sage grouse habitat needs has been critical to in efforts to keep the species from being listed. On-going cooperative efforts by OWEB and ODA have energized the Ag Water Quality Management Program which has in turn brought into being 50 water quality Focus Areas and 15 Strategic Implementation Areas through SWCDs. While the results from these efforts are not yet fully tabulated early results are positive.

Your careful consideration and support of HB 5040 is greatly appreciated.

Jerry Nicolescu, Executive Director  
OACD