



Oregon Association of
Conservation Districts

February 25, 2019

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
senr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: Support SB 432 Lottery Bonds for the Levee Project Subaccount

To Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Olsen, and members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts in support of SB 432. The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts serves and represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), which promote and implement voluntary conservation projects. This work contributes to the resilience of rural and urban areas alike as stream restoration and similar projects improve hydrology and fish habitat. Aging infrastructure like levees not only add significant costs and complexity to valuable conservation work, but also pose threats to habitat, fish passage, private property, and human life. The average age of levees in Oregon is 55 years old, and is associated with other important infrastructure like tide gates and culverts. In addition to significant wear and tear, designs are often outdated and do not meet current standards for protecting fish habitat and passage, water quality and stream channel health, or resistance to natural disasters. **We encourage the legislature to support SB 432, authorizing the issuance of \$10 million to the Levee Project Subaccount.**

The \$10 million proposed to be added to the Levee Project Subaccount is not enough to meet the need, but would be a much-needed contribution to addressing Oregon's aging water infrastructure. In the Portland area alone, the annual cost of levee maintenance is estimated to be nearly \$20 million. While Portland has used taxes to fund some of this maintenance, it is not enough to keep up with the need. An investment of \$10 million from the Lottery Fund would help communities around the state ensure their investments are not wasted on piecemeal maintenance by supporting strategic maintenance and repairs of larger problems.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB 432 and the need to invest in repairing Oregon's aging water control infrastructure. We applaud the work you and others have done to protect and enhance Oregon's natural resources, and encourage you to continue doing so through investing **at least \$10 million in the Levee Project Subaccount**. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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