



TESTIMONY REGARDING Senate Bill 445:

Oregon Invasive Species Council

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

February 26, 2019

MEMBERS

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senator Alan Olsen, Vice Chair
Senator Herman Baertschiger
Senator Floyd Prozanski
Senator Arnie Roblan

Distinguished Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Olsen and Members of the Senate Committee,

The Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District welcomes the opportunity to provide written testimony in regard to the proposed senate bill, SB 445 pertaining to the Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC). We provide this information to help legislators reach a reasoned and informed decision.

As an organization that works directly on invasive species issues in Clackamas County, we are familiar with the impacts and challenges of managing invasive species at the landscape and regional scale. The Oregon Invasive Species Council serves an important and unique role in coordinating the response of various state-wide departments and agencies to new and emerging threats to Oregonians.

Invasive species threaten the livability of our communities and adversely impact our social, economic, and natural resources. One study looking at the introduction of zebra mussels, estimated that the potential cost of this *one* organism at \$25.5 million annually for cleaning and maintaining the turbines of 13 hydropower facilities on the Columbia River to be in the regionⁱ. Alarming, this figure is now nearly 15 years old and does not take into account, the loss in productivity from power generation, or the disruption to our local fisheries and tourism-based economies.

Another study entitled the *Economic Impact from Selected Noxious Weeds in Oregon* looked at just 25 of our 128 designated noxious weeds and found that these 25 species alone cost Oregonians “\$83.5 million in personal income to the State's economy” per yearⁱⁱ. Without active management these losses are predicted to rise to 1.8 billion annually. These damages are disproportionately felt by our agricultural and natural resources-based producers.

Invasive species impact the livability of our communities. Many invasive species pose a threat to human health and property. Some invasive species like giant hogweed are known to cause severe burns and possibly blindness to people. Other invasives plants are known to be poisonous and threaten pets, livestock, and wildlife. Invasive pests like sudden oak death or spotted-wing drosophila threaten entire industries. These invasive species degrade the quality of life we Oregonians enjoy and alter the way we interact with our surroundings.

Oregon's wild lands and natural areas are also adversely impacted by invasive species. Invasive species displace our native plants and animals, degrade the quality of our natural resources, and result in a landscape that is less Oregon-like. This disruption of our local ecology leads to the continued degradation of our natural systems and the viability of our tourism-based economy. Oregon's natural areas generate millions of dollars of revenue from tourism each year and is a vital component influencing the livability of our communities.

The Oregon Invasive Species Council serves a vital role to the citizens of Oregon by mitigating the many direct and indirect impacts from invasive species. The role of the OSIC is an invaluable resource that empowers local entities like the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District. The proposed funding changes for OSIC will allow them to respond more rapidly in the event of an invasive species emergency. The changes to the organizational structure of OISC in the proposed Senate Bill 445 will also improve the coordination of invasive species management and help to protect Oregon's natural resources.

We sincerely thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on an issue of such importance to Oregonians.

Respectfully,



Tom Salzer,

General Manager



Samuel Leininger

WeedWise Program Manager

ⁱ Phillips, S. 2005. "Potential economic impacts of zebra mussels on the hydropower facilities in the Columbia River Basin." Report prepared for the Bonneville Power Administration, February 2005.

ⁱⁱ The Research Group, LLC. 2014. *Economic Impact from Selected Noxious Weeds in Oregon*. Prepared for Oregon Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Control Program.