



Providing Natural Resource Leadership

March 7, 2019

Representative Brian Clem
Agriculture and Land Use Committee Members
Oregon State Legislature

Re: HB 2958

Dear Chair Clem and Agriculture and Land Use Committee Members,

The Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District (district), is providing this written testimony to communicate its concern of language and potential impacts of HB 2958. Our district is one of 45 conservation districts in Oregon. We assist and work with landowners, land managers, and other constituents in Yamhill County and work with a number of state, federal and local conservation partners.

The proposed bill in its current form is of concern and could eliminate geographic representation on the governing body conservation districts. All conservation districts have zones which have been established by the Oregon Department of Agriculture to ensure individuals from all parts of a district have the opportunity to serve and become involved. Broad representation is important for conservation districts as they implement local conservation projects, conduct outreach, and assist the state with ODA's Agricultural Water Quality Program and other natural resource priorities.

The statutes in ORS Chapter 568 are administered primarily by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). Our district recommends the Agriculture and Land Use Committee table this bill and advise ODA research concerns and evaluate potential consequences of a statute change. ODA should implement this process through its advisory body, the Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) and provide opportunity for interested parties and conservation districts to participate.

Our district embraces the concept of inclusion, seeks opportunities for interested citizens to become involve, and are interested in providing input to ODA and the OSWCC on this matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Larry Ojua, Executive Director