



Oregon Association of  
Conservation Districts

March 12, 2019

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
[jwmnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:jwmnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

From: The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: HB 5510 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Budget, Additional Funding for Local Implementation Teams Coordination

To Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon and members of the Subcommittee on Natural Resources,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 5510. I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts to express **support for HB 5510, and recommend amending the bill to support coordination of Local Implementation Teams**. OACD serves and represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as nonprofit, federal, and state partners like the Oregon Department of Forestry. The Policy Option Packages proposed in HB 5510 would provide significant public benefits through the conservation and enhancement of the natural resources that are critical to our environment, recreation, and community wellbeing. **Amending the bill with \$200,000 funding for coordination of the Burns/Lakeview Local Implementation teams meets a critical need to ensure strong conservation of the Greater Sage Grouse throughout the species' range in Oregon.**

Among the many conservation goals SWCDs work on with private landowners and state, federal, and nonprofit partners, sage grouse is an exemplar of how the partnership approach to conservation can address pressing natural resource problems while working with and protecting local communities and economies. Local Implementation Teams (LITs) are the vehicle for aligning efforts among the many SageCon partners and developing long-term plans and priorities to guide investment in conservation efforts. For example, the Baker LIT has become a strong partnership that was awarded a 6-year commitment of more than \$6 million from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), including funding for an LIT coordinator. Although the Baker LIT has been successful in obtaining funding for an LIT coordinator, there is still a crucial need to invest in coordination of LITs in other areas of sage grouse habitat. Amending HB 5510 to add a coordinator for two LITs, Burns and Lakeview, thereby making it possible to develop long-term implementation plans for

reducing threats to sage grouse in those districts. **LITs are central to effective implementation of Oregon's Sage Grouse Action Plan, which will be a key consideration in the federal review of the decision not to list sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act.** This is but one of many projects ODFW is involved in to ensure the health, beauty, and resilience of Oregon's landscape and natural resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony HB 5510 and the importance of conserving and enhancing fish, wildlife, and habitat through programs like the Local Implementation Teams that conserve the Greater Sage Grouse. **We encourage you to pass HB 5510 with an additional \$200,000 for coordination of Burns/Lakeview Local Implementation Teams**, and to further support SageCon and Eastern Oregon communities through investments in the coordination of Local Implementation Teams in SageCon coordination of the partnership as a whole (HB 5027), rangeland fire protection (HB 5019) and monitoring to ensure we maintain and build on the progress we've made. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Freitas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anna" and last name "Freitas" clearly distinguishable.

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