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March 2, 2021

House Committee on Water

Testimony in support of HB 3105: Place-Based Planning

Submitted by: Amelia Porterfield, Senior Policy Advisor

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your attention to HB 3105, which supports Place-Based Planning by appropriating funds to the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to assist with completion of place-based integrated water resources strategy.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Oregon, TNC has over 80,000 supporters and members in every county. Based in communities around the state, we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with ranchers, farmers, fishers, timber and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature.

TNC supports Place-Based Planning as a method of water management that directly addresses ecological priorities and impacts to frontline communities. TNC has firsthand experience with Place-Based Planning as a member of the Harney Basin Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative. This collaborative is comprised of a wide range of stakeholders, including state agencies, irrigators, conservation organizations, and domestic well users. Together, these participants have made significant progress to identify critical water resource solutions that will benefit a sustainable economy, diverse ecosystems, and resilient water supplies.

Developing and implementing place-based integrated water resource strategies is inherently complex and resource intensive. The Place-Based Planning process includes an assessment of current hydrologic conditions, water demand, and future water needs—all of which rely on state and federal monitoring wells and groundwater studies. Implementing water resource plans is also dependent upon reliable and timely data collection to adaptively manage the resource, evaluate success, and to ensure transparency and accountability.

OWRD needs additional funding to finalize the place-based plans and help communities implement the voluntary strategies they identify. In-stream flows, groundwater-dependent ecosystems, rural economies, and vulnerable and impacted domestic well users all benefit from the actions identified in the bill.

We appreciate Rep. Owens for bringing this legislation forward and encourage you to advance it to Ways & Means for funding consideration.

Thank you.