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June 1, 2023

Sen. Kate Lieber, Chair  
Senate Committee On Rules  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Lieber and Members of the Committee,

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (THPRD) is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning 50 square miles and serving about 270,000 residents in and around Beaverton, Oregon. Established over 65 years ago, THPRD's mission is to provide natural areas, high-quality park and recreational facilities, programs, services, and natural areas that meet the needs of the diverse communities it serves. We strive to provide all individuals the opportunity to play, learn, and explore, and all employees and volunteers the opportunity to further the district's mission. We do this by removing barriers to participation, fostering an inclusive culture, and offering programs that celebrate the district's diverse population.

On behalf of the THPRD board of directors, I'm writing to express the district's support for SB 775, which removes an outdated and inequitable requirement of land ownership for urban Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) zone director eligibility. Currently, state law limits the eligibility of SWCD zone directors to those who own or manage at least 10 acres of land. This severely limits the pool of viable candidates for this important work. This requirement is a barrier to leadership opportunities for urban residents, tenants, conservationists who don't own land, and people of color who continue to be burdened by a legacy of exclusionary laws. This legislation would constitute an important step toward increasing representation in our elected offices.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Please contact Aisha Panas, Deputy General Manager, at [a.panas@thprd.org](mailto:a.panas@thprd.org) or by phone at 503-816-5804, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Felicita Monteblanco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Felicita Monteblanco  
President, THPRD Board of Directors