

June 6, 2023

To: Senate Rules Committee

Re: SB 775 Soil and Water Conservation District Board Eligibility
Chair Lieber and Committee Members,

My name is Jessica Rojas and I would like to submit this letter of support for SB 775. SB 775 seeks to update the eligibility rules for soil and water conservation districts so candidates for zoned seats in districts with populations of over 250,000 do not have to own or manage at least 10 acres of land. We believe this is a long overdue update to the current statute.

I live in District 46, representatives Kam Pham and Michael Dembrow and within the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation district.

I support this bill for the following reasons:

- The statute that limits eligible candidates for zoned seats to those who own or manage at least 10 acres does not realistically address the needs of Soil and Water districts with larger populations and significant urban considerations when making policy decisions regarding soil and water health.
- This statutory update makes a lot of sense and is long overdue to bring the eligibility for candidates running for soil and water conservation district director positions in larger and more urbanized districts.
- SB 775 only impacts six soil and water conservation districts in Oregon because it only applies to districts with a population of over 250,000, recognizing that smaller more rural districts aren't necessarily having to deal with urban issues as they relate to soil and water health. It seems like a reasonable compromise that responds to actual needs.

Lastly, the ability to serve on a water and soil district is similar in reach to serving on a neighborhood association board. These boards need to include renters, especially those who work/ serve in these sectors of providing labor, services and expertise that benefits/ supports these working lands. Very few people in the city of Portland own 10 acres of land or more. It is long overdue that we are inclusive of those who do not own 10 acres of land or more, to these soil and water conservation districts, as we seek their commitment, knowledge and expertise, on these boards. We want competent people with the knowledge, less the land, to help sustain the quality and future of land/ water for urbanized communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica Rojas

7979 SE Flavel Portland OR 97206

Regional Parks/ Natural areas employee

jdianarojas@gmail.com