

Submitter: Marcia Sinclair

On Behalf Of: Myself

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB2527

Marcia Sinclair
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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
The Honorable Ken Helm
Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Marcia Sinclair. I am writing today urging your support for House Bill 2527.

I retired last year from a career in communication and stakeholder engagement, working for conservation nonprofit organizations (Willamette Restoration Initiative and Willamette Partnership) and public agencies (Metro and ODFW) that work to protect key habitats in the Willamette Basin and invest public funds in habitat restoration. Today, I am vice chair of the Greater Oregon City Watershed Council and serve on the steering committee of the Intertwine Regional Habitat Connectivity Working Group. Through the work of each of these organizations, I have been made keenly aware of the loss of oak woodland and oak savanna habitats in the Willamette Basin and the precarious conservation status of these critically important components of our western Oregon landscapes.

So much of the remaining oak habitat across the basin is in private ownership. We all depend on the voluntary efforts of landowners to conserve and restore their ecological function. This isn't required of them and generally isn't profitable. They do it because they value these habitats and feel it is the right thing to do. As members of the public, we gain so much from their efforts in terms of wildlife habitat, landscape fire resilience and beauty. It is therefore incumbent upon us to provide incentives that encourage and support their efforts.

Managing for habitat is generally not a money maker. The Wildlife Habitat Conservation Management Program is a great tool to provide support to landowners but needs to be revived and adapted to be more efficient, increase capacity and reduce landowner financial risk. The adaptations in House Bill 2527 will do that and is supported by a wide variety of land management and conservation partners as well as oak habitat enthusiasts like me. There are landowners across the state ready to enroll and move us closer to achieving the goals set out in the Oregon Conservation

Strategy. We need the tools in place to support them.

Please vote Yes on House Bill 2527 and advance it the full legislature. Please also modify it to include language from soil and water conservation districts.

Thank you,

Marcia Sinclair