



YAMHILL SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

January 23, 2023

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District

Re: **Support HB 2527- Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Management Program**

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District (YSWCD) supports HB 2527 which would amend certain provisions within the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Management Program (WHCMP) to lessen the burden on State of Oregon budgets and workload for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). HB 2527 would provide critical tax deferrals to Oregonians supporting voluntary wildlife habitat development on their own properties.

WHCMP is as important of a deferral for private landowners as the currently available forestry and agricultural deferrals. Restoration and maintenance of natural habitats on private lands within our state is expensive. This cost and lack of economic return coupled with paying full property taxes is a major barrier to doing restoration on their own or even participating in state and federal programs which provide some amount of assistance. Oregon wouldn't be Oregon without our native habitats including oak woodlands, riparian buffers, and wetlands, all of which do not qualify for forest or agricultural deferrals. This is especially important when considering our wildlife species which are listed as threatened or endangered and depend upon these habitats. HB 2527 will streamline WHCMP, resulting in an affordable tax incentive program which can be implemented across the state.

YSWCD encourages Chair Helm and the committee members to support this bill and is ready to support ODFW and Yamhill County landowners who choose to enroll in this program.

Thank you for your consideration and for supporting Oregonians that provide wildlife habitat on their properties.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the District Board.

Barbara Boyer, District Chair