



Harney Soil & Water Conservation District
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February 14, 2023

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
From: Harney Soil and Water Conservation District
Re: Support HB 2998

Chair Helm and members of the Committee,

The Harney Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) is a local special district that services Harney County in its entirety. The District protects and enhances soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat through supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for the support of HB 2998, which establishes the Oregon Soil Health Initiative to leverage existing programs and expand resources to support farmers and ranchers with soil health practices that make the most sense for their land and businesses. As many rural communities agriculture drives Harney County's culture, economy, and land conditions.

The bill would give Soil and Water Conservation Districts like ours the capacity to promote soil health principles and practices to Oregon's agricultural communities by:

- (A) providing training and education for agricultural producers to promote soil health across this state's diverse regions and production types;
- (B) collaborating with local partners and landowners to promote soil health demonstration projects to showcase practices and build statewide awareness and understanding; and
- (C) highlighting existing soil health improvement efforts by Oregon farmers and ranchers.

The Healthy Soils Bill would give us the capacity to do this work to support farmers and ranchers in our county. Thank you for your support of HB 2998.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Kesling".

Jason Kesling
Harney SWCD, District Manager
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kesling@harneyswcd.net