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

Testimony in support of HB 3163: Establishing a Place-Based Water Planning Fund

Submitted by: Zach Freed, Sustainable Water Program Director

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Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy **supports House Bill 3163 with minor amendments**. The amendments will strengthen HB 3163 by aligning the bill with recommendations from the Work Group on State-Supported Regional Water Planning & Management.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Oregon, TNC has over 80,000 supporters and members in every community around the state, where we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with ranchers, farmers, fishers, and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature.

The Nature Conservancy supports Place-Based Water Planning as a strong collaborative approach to water management that directly addresses water needs for fish & wildlife, impacts to frontline communities, water quality, and water availability in a changing climate. The four existing Place-Based Planning Collaboratives have included diverse and representative stakeholders including irrigators, municipalities, federally recognized tribes, domestic well users, and conservation organizations. Together, these Collaboratives have developed plans that benefit ecosystems and rural economies and are implementing strategies that increase water resiliency and access to clean drinking water in a changing climate.

Oregon needs collaborative planning efforts to ensure a sustainable water future for people and nature. Members of the Work Group on State-Supported Regional Water Planning & Management discussed strategies and approaches to strengthen water planning in Oregon, culminating in a final report with a series of recommendations<sup>[1]</sup>. House Bill 3163 can be made even more effective through slight changes, such as alignment with Recommendations F and P from the report—both of which received unanimous support within the Work Group. Please refer to proposed redline amendments submitted by Trout Unlimited for specific suggestions.

Please consider supporting an amended version of HB 3163.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

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[1] Report of the Work Group on State-Supported Regional Water Planning & Management (2021):  
[https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/Planning/water\\_planning\\_mgmt\\_group\\_hb5006/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/Planning/water_planning_mgmt_group_hb5006/Pages/default.aspx)