



Oregon Conservation Partnership



Oregon Conservation Education
& Assistance Network

March 30th, 2023

To: The Oregon Legislature House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Re: **Support** for **HB3349**, Relating to infrastructure; declaring an emergency.

About the Oregon Conservation Partnership

The Oregon Conservation Partnership (OrCP) **represents 132 conservation organizations** that work together to conserve Oregon's native fish and wildlife habitat and protect watershed health. Our members- land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and watershed councils- work with willing landowners to accomplish voluntary conservation and restoration across Oregon.

Greetings, Chair Bynum:

We are writing today in support of HB3349, Relating to infrastructure, and for the establishment of a regional solutions infrastructure director within the Regional Solutions Program. **Further we strongly support the -1 amendment** which would create a "funding readiness hub" to work in consultation with Oregon's Regional Solutions team (including the OrCP) to assist in bringing federal grant dollars to Oregon's programs.

At present, our individual member organizations, our three statewide associations, and the Oregon Conservation Partnership all lack sufficient capacity to effectively navigate, seek and apply for relevant federal funding available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). We believe that

the establishment of a funding readiness hub would provide an efficient, equitable and timely resource that would streamline the process for conservation districts, land trusts and watershed councils to seek and apply for these federal funds. By providing a match, the Oregon legislature would increase our ability to effectively compete for these federal funds, and would result in a significant overall increase in resources available to support important conservation and restoration projects across the state.

The funds identified for the OrCP in the proposed amendment would greatly support our current efforts to organize and serve our member organizations in concert with one another. It would provide valuable support for our capacity to widely share resources, and provide necessary training and assistance in applying for and securing state match and federal funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,



Kelley Beamer, Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts



Vanessa Green, Executive Director
Network of Oregon Watershed Councils



Jan Lee, Executive Director
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts



Cynthia Warnock, President,
Ocean Conservation Education & Assistance Network



Oregon Conservation Education
& Assistance Network