



Dear Co-Chairs Dembrow and Pham and Members of the Subcommittee:

Oregon Wildfires in 2020 and 2021 had devastating and far-reaching impacts on our state’s natural resources, with over 1.5 million acres of burn area, including hundreds of thousands of acres in watersheds crucial to drinking water and fish and wildlife. We are grateful to the legislature for listening to Tribes, Natural Resource Agencies, Drinking Water Providers, Watershed Councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Land Trusts, and the public – the 2021 legislature made historic needed investments in post-fire natural and cultural resources recovery – thank you!

We appreciate the good work done to date by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) in administering the 2021 legislature’s investment in a deployment of funds in multiple grant cycles towards riparian/uplands restoration, floodplain restoration/reconnection, and land acquisition with voluntary willing sellers. OWEB has been an excellent partner and communicator with local agencies doing this work.

Much progress has been made already by local partners in the on-the ground natural resources restoration work funded and administered through OWEB, but implementation of floodplain/riparian restoration and land acquisition remains ongoing and some unspent balances in this biennial budget remain from the wildfire recovery funds allocated in the 2021 legislative session.

***Together we urge the legislature to include these unspent wildfire recovery balances in a reallocation in OWEB’s 2023-2025 budget.*** The timelines for these important projects do not fit neatly into a biennial budget. Limited in-water construction seasons, supply chain issues, public outreach, landowner communication – especially landowners displaced by wildfires– are examples of the work these projects entail. OWEB’s ongoing standard grant program offerings funded by lottery typically have a six-year window for project completion. Most of the projects funded by the 2021 legislative investments are progressing. An extension past the current biennium is needed though for their completion – to account for some of the unique timing elements associated with natural resources restoration. *Please also support OWEB’s agency capacity to oversee the completion of these important projects.* Thank you!

**Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC)**  
**City of Salem**  
**McKenzie Watershed Council**  
**North Santiam Watershed Council**  
**Oregon Association of Conservations Districts (OACD)**  
**Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council**

**Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT)**  
**Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB)**  
**Rogue River Watershed Council**  
**Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**Klamath Watershed Partnership**  
**McKenzie River Trust**