



Wallowa Soil & Water Conservation District

401 NE 1st Street, Suite E
Enterprise, Oregon 97828
(541) 263-3049

April 18, 2023

Re: Support of SB5540

Hello,

On behalf of the Wallowa Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), I would like to express how important OWEB funding has been for our district, local landowners and natural resources. I began working for the SWCD in 1993 and one of the tasks was to write grants for producers to do projects that benefit natural resources and improve their operation. The granting process through OWEB has made many changes over the years and the program helps fund more types of activities such as land leases and Focused Investment Partnership. They have evolved with the times making it a very valuable funding entity for organizations and private landowners hoping to improve natural resources.

In the 29 years of working with OWEB and landowners, I have seen many good conservation projects implemented on the ground. These projects range from upland water troughs, instream irrigation diversions, irrigation mainlines, weed control to forest thinning. These grants enabled other cost shares and partnerships with Bureau of Reclamation, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and various Tribes. I have heard so many times from landowners how grateful they were for the financial help to do conservation work on their land and make their operations better as well as environmentally friendly. Many of these projects would have never been implemented without the help from OWEB.

There is a database that OWEB keeps that displays how many projects they have financially helped implement. This is a wonderful tool to see how much money has been spent, how many miles of riparian areas have been fenced off, how many miles of irrigation pipelines have been installed and so on. It is impressive on how many projects have been completed.

When I first started with the Wallowa SWCD, I was hired to work 20 hours a week because the funding was limited to hire a full-time employee. Since that time Districts now receive capacity grants through ODA which has enabled Districts to hire employees at competitive salaries and to hire more employees. This enables more technical assistance to landowners, ability to partner more with other entities and write grants for projects, strategic plans etc. The capacity grants have enabled Districts to do more.

As the OCEAN president, I say thank you for the OWEB funding. OWEB has granted us funding enabling us to provide valuable training to SWCD employees and our partners. The diversity that OWEB provides funding for makes it a key partner in the natural resource community. I ask that you please support SB 5540.

Respectfully,

Cynthia Warnock

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Wallowa SWCD District Manager