



NETWORK of OREGON

WATERSHED COUNCILS

April 19th, 2023

To: The Oregon Legislature House Committee on Revenue

Re: **Support** for **HB2527**, Relating to wildlife habitat special assessment; prescribing an effective date.

Greetings, Chair Nathanson and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

The [Network of Oregon Watershed Councils](#) (NOWC) represents **55 watershed councils** statewide, which are local, community-based, non-regulatory groups that assess and monitor environmental conditions, and conduct voluntary conservation projects to restore/enhance the waters and lands for native species and people. Since 1997, the Oregon legislature has encouraged local governments to form watershed councils through [Oregon Statute 541.910](#).

Each watershed council takes a holistic approach to watershed enhancement and restoration, applying a ridgetop to ridgetop perspective. This involves working within all types of ecosystems in Oregon to restore critical habitat for fish and wildlife on both public and private lands. Consistent with the “Oregon Way”, watershed councils focus heavily on relationship building to foster collaboration towards common goals with diverse stakeholders.

NOWC supports HB 2527 as it would provide valuable incentives for collaboration for landowners in engaging in habitat conservation.

This bill incentivizes landowner participation in conservation and restoration work in Oregon. Because landowners are key to watershed council work across the state, NOWC fully supports this bill and its passage into rule. The funds provided will encourage private landowners, who hold title to some of the most important locations for habitat restoration work, to engage in voluntary conservation collaborations.

Thank you for your consideration,

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