



April 13, 2023

Co-Chair Lew Frederick  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE, S-419  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Co-Chair Susan McLain  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court St. NE, H-493  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Frederick and Representative McLain:

High Desert Partnership (HDP) is writing to express full support to restore current funding levels for the programs of the National Policy Consensus Center - Oregon Solutions and Oregon Consensus, which funded as a part of the dispute resolutions service allocation. For over a decade, we have relied on the expertise of these programs to help resolve difficult issues in Eastern Oregon, and to bring forward collaborative approaches to address complex community projects. Now as much as ever, we need these valuable programs to help effectively bring together diverse perspectives and leverage scarce resources in ways that build lasting solutions. Without the facilitation and project management skills they bring, it will be more challenging for Oregon communities to tackle complex issues that might otherwise not be addressed.

Oregon Solutions and Oregon Consensus are committed to supporting the development of collaborative approaches to addressing community priorities and building local capacity to support these efforts once established. These programs have supported the establishment and provided facilitation for many important collaborative efforts in our community, including:

- Harney County Forest Restoration Collaborative
- Harney County Wildfire Collaborative
- Harney County Youth Initiative
- Sage Grouse related activities, including development of the State Action Plan and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA's)
- Harney County Placed-based Water Collaborative
- Malheur Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan agreement and associated implementation
- Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative



As we have experienced over many years and many diverse efforts, Oregon Solutions' collaborative projects also work to leverage resources and attract significant financial support for projects from within and outside the state, multiplying legislative investments to the benefit of local communities. Also, Oregon Consensus interventions break impasses that restrict progress, build direction for effective collective action, and help create equitable policies for all Oregonians – all while saving the state significant resources that otherwise would have been spent in litigation or inefficiencies.

Cuts to these programs would directly reduce their capacity to provide the level of collaborative support and conflict resolution services our state desperately needs. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

*Brenda Smith*

Brenda Smith, Ph.D.  
Director, High Desert Partnership

cc:

Senator Michael Dembrow  
Senator Suzanne Weber  
Representative Tracy Cramer  
Representative Emily McIntire  
Representative Hoa Nguyen  
Representative Ricki Ruiz