



May 22, 2023

To: Senate Rules Committee

Re: SB 775 Soil and Water Conservation District Board Eligibility

Chair Lieber and Committee Members,

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council would like to submit this letter of support for SB 775.

SB 775 seeks to update the eligibility rules for soil and water conservation districts so candidates for zoned seats in districts with populations of over 250,000 do not have to own or manage at least 10 acres of land. We believe this is a long overdue update to the current statute.

CSWC stewards and advocates for one of the watersheds in East Multnomah County as well as partners and works with the East multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District. We strongly encourage a yes vote on this legislation for several reasons.

- The statute that limits eligible candidates for zoned seats to those who own or manage at least 10 acres does not realistically address the needs of Soil and Water districts with larger populations and significant urban considerations, such as the Columbia Slough Watershed, when making policy decisions regarding soil and water health.
- SB 775 only impacts six soil and water conservation districts in Oregon because it only applies to districts with a population of over 250,000, recognizing that smaller more rural districts aren't necessarily having to deal with urban issues as they relate to soil and water health. It seems like a reasonable compromise that responds to actual needs.

Thank you for your consideration,

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