



**OREGON
WILD**

Protecting Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters since 1974.

Date: February 7, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

RE: **SB 1561 - Establishes the Environmental Restoration Council**

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Wild, and our 20,000 members and supporters from around the state, we urge your support for SB 1561, with some technical amendments.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, otherwise known as PCBs or 'forever chemicals' are a highly pervasive contaminant that greatly harms our natural environment including waterways, fish, wildlife, and soil. Because of bioaccumulation and biomagnification, fish and wildlife are particularly susceptible to its negative effects, such as disease, and can disrupt growth, energy production, and reproduction. In Oregon, there are 294 species considered at an elevated risk of extinction.

Given the outsized impact PCBs have on the state's fish, wildlife, and habitat, we urge your support for two changes:

1. Inclusion of language in the bill to clarify that funds from the settlement can be used for restoration.
2. Furthermore, programs that focus on species' recovery and habitat restoration require long-term funding in order to effectively implement necessary actions. To that end, we urge you to include additional language to clarify that the Environmental Restoration Council has the authority to allocate funding to relevant state agencies for longer than a biennium.

We believe these changes stay true to the intent of the settlement agreement and will result in better outcomes for imperiled fish and wildlife for less money. We are happy to help with crafting any dash-one amendments necessary to achieve these two changes.

Thank you for your time and for establishing the Environmental Restoration Council to effectively, fairly, and efficiently use the Monsanto settlement fund.