



Testimony before House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
February 7, 20

Thank you for the opportunity to join you this morning. I am Andrea Durbin, executive director of Oregon Environmental Council (OEC). For those of you who have not worked with us yet, OEC is one of the oldest statewide environmental organizations in Oregon. We have worked on policy in the Legislature since 1968. We are a non-partisan organization committed to working collaboratively to find enduring solutions.

OEC's strategic approach includes a healthy environment, a healthy economy and enhancing social equity. For example, we have worked with the Oregon nursery industry to help them adopt more climate friendly measures to reduce their energy use and save money. Through this work we helped 9 nurseries reduce their carbon emissions by 20% over 3 years while implementing changes that will reduce costs - a win-win.

We've also worked with cranberry growers on the South Coast to become sustainably certified, develop a local, sustainable brand and get higher price for their product.

We understand the need for local capacity to support farmers in conservation. To that end, we've collaborated with the agricultural community to increase funding for soil and water conservation districts and watershed councils and to add back funding for OSU Extension, Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Forest Research Laboratory.

We'd like to see the committee take a balanced approach to managing our precious water resources. This means ensuring adequate water supplies to support a strong economy while also using our water more efficiently, protecting water quality, and ensuring enough is left instream to provide fish and wildlife habitat. OEC, our conservation partners and water users have been working hard to find common ground. We hope this committee will support those collaborative efforts, which includes implementing the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

We support local, collaborative solutions to environmental issues such as pesticide stewardship partnerships. That's why we support the Governor's \$1.5M proposed budget package to provide state funding for community-led pesticide stewardship partnerships as an important strategy for protecting water quality in Oregon. These partnerships can enable communities to solve problems more quickly, more cost effectively and avoid the need for a regulatory approach. For example, in Hood and Umatilla counties, Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships led by local orchardists have reduced pesticide detections significantly, by over 90 %.

Finally, fully funding the Natural Resource agencies will be a top priority for OEC. Natural resource activities are a major economic driver in Oregon's economy, contributing to 37% of Oregon's GDP and over a half a million jobs. Investing in the Natural Resource Agencies is as much an economic investment strategy as an environmental one. We have seen that when we cut back that investment, our natural resource assets are diminished: a good case in point is today's overall decline in water quality. We hope to work with all of you to uphold the investment required to maintain and protect Oregon's natural resources.

Thank you.