



*NESTUCCA, NESKOWIN & SAND LAKE
WATERSHEDS COUNCIL*

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To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Guy Sievert, President of the Nestucca, Neskowin, Sand Lake Watershed Council

Re: Testimony in **support of SB 5539 and SB 5540** – OWEB's budget

I appreciate the opportunity to write in support of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's budget needs. I'm sure you are aware that without OWEB operational grant support most watershed councils could not exist. But it is much more than that. OWEB grant support allows us to be the coordinating hub around which federal, state and county agencies come together with local communities and supportive non profits to protect, preserve and restore our watershed systems.

OWEB's operational grant program provides us staff to give presentations and to schedule regular science programs to educate our communities about watershed issues, about fish and

wildlife that inhabit our watersheds, and in our case, about changing conditions in our ocean. And most importantly, it provides staff to write the grants and coordinate the projects that lead to improved watershed system health.

Our Council provides opportunities for volunteers to participate in estuary cleanups, a native plant nursery, water quality monitoring, invasive species control and much more. All with staff supported by an OWEB grant.

Our work is planned and coordinated by a board consisting of community members who represent our timber and dairy farming communities, our commercial and sport fishing community, our local schools, water districts, and each urban community in our four major watersheds. Our mission is centered on working landscapes that also provide healthy habitat for fish and wildlife, and for recreational use by those who live and visit here. This is the Oregon Plan in action.

OWEB makes this all possible. Its operational grants give us the staff and structure. Its restoration and technical assistance grants give us the money to get projects done. OWEB gives us the means to engage local stakeholders and conduct research on our watersheds, both resulting in well informed restoration investments.

With OWEB as a partner in projects, we are able to leverage their participation and bring in funds from many other sources, both public and private. Yes, OWEB is part of that critical base that will hold and protect Oregon's natural resources for decades to come.

The Nestucca, Neskowin, Sand Lake Watershed Council invites all members of our state legislature to come and visit this wonderful south Tillamook County landscape and spend time with us to learn about the many things we do to keep it healthy and productive for years to come.



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