



February 4, 2021

Representative Witt, Chair
Representative Breese-Iverson, Vice-Chair
Representative Hudson, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Re: Support for House Bill 2032

Dear Chair Witt and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the House Bill (HB) 2032. Trout Unlimited (TU) is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the conservation of coldwater fishes, such as trout and salmon, and their habitats. TU has more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide including over 3,000 in Oregon. TU and its members have a strong interest in ensuring that the values and functions of wetlands and streams are appropriately protected by regulatory programs. Streams and wetlands provide valuable habitat for many important fish and wildlife species. Additionally, wetlands can provide other critical ecosystem services such as water quality filtration.

TU was a member of the wetland working group subcommittee that convened in 2018-2019 to consider changes to the regulatory program for maintenance of traditionally maintained agricultural channels. The culmination of that effort was HB 2437, which passed in the 2019 Regular Session. The intent of HB 2437 was to create a more workable process for agricultural producers to maintain their channels while protecting ecological functions. During working group discussions on HB 2437 concepts, the topic of a “phased-in” approach to implementation was considered. Such an approach was favored by many members of the working group because it would allow the responsible agencies (Department of State Lands, Department of Agriculture and Department of Fish and Wildlife) to assess and adjust the program on a smaller scale before offering it statewide. It was thought that such an approach would also allow the agencies and partners the space to do necessary outreach with members of the agricultural community and allow a related ecological study being conducted by Oregon State University to progress. However, explicit language allowing such an approach was not included in HB 2437. HB 2032 seeks to remedy this omission.

The sole intent of HB 2032 is to authorize a phased, region-by-region approach to implementation of HB 2437. The language and supporting information make it clear that authorities or obligations established under HB 2437 will not be changed as a result of HB 2032. Currently, the three responsible agencies are working closely together to implement HB 2437 and to ensure that their respective roles and obligations are clearly captured in a memorandum of

understanding (MOU) and other written materials. HB 2032 will help this implementation process proceed smoothly.

TU supports the very narrow allowance in HB 2032 and is appreciative of the efforts of the agencies to collaboratively implement HB 2437. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chandra Ferrari".

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