



March 28, 2021

To House Committee on Water

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: Support for HB 2251 – Local and Regional Water Planning

Chair Helm and Committee Members,

OACD represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by countywide elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

OACD supports HB 2251 which provides funding to the Water Resources Department for planning water use on a regional and local basis. Demands on water resources in Oregon will continue to increase in the future due to population growth, ecosystem needs, and climate changes. It is imperative that we improve the understanding of our water systems and seek innovative solutions to efficiently use our water to meet the competing demands. Because water is linked to characteristics of watersheds, planning on a local and regional levels makes much sense.

The Water Resources Department understands how to conduct local planning as evidenced by its various place-based planning efforts. The department also has a strong vision of where it wants to go in the future as outlined in its Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The missing ingredient is funding. Therefore, we urge passage of HB 2251.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your decision-making process.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stan Dean".

Stan Dean, Advocacy Committee Chair
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
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