

May 4, 2021

Senator Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Holvey, Co-Chair
Oregon State Legislature Joint Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee
900 Court St NE, Salem, OR 97301

RE: Deschutes Basin Board of Control: Bond State Funds - SB 5534

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and members of the Joint Capital Construction Subcommittee,

The Deschutes Basin Board of Control (DBBC) is comprised of eight irrigation districts in rural Central Oregon that are critical to conveying water supplies throughout the Deschutes Basin to nearly 9,000 farm and ranch families, schools, and Bend Parks and Recreation. Farming and ranching have long played important roles in Oregon's development. Agriculture continues to contribute to the region's economy through job creation, capital investment, and reliable economic activity.

The DBBC has been working with Oregon's Congressional delegation, led by Senator Merkley, for several years to secure a viable, cost-share for water conservation and fish and wildlife restoration projects.

The DBBC is requesting the Joint Ways and Means Board consider reallocating the original amount of \$10 million that was legislatively adopted in the 2019-21 biennium budget and recently cut with the cancellation of the sale of state bonds. The \$10 million funding from the state met the 25% match requirement for the current \$42 million in shovel ready PL 566 funded projects.

The Districts have secured \$110 million in federal funding (PL 566 funding) for projects. Central Oregon irrigation districts need the match funding to proceed with water conservation projects that benefit spotted frog preservation while ensuring farmers and ranchers in the region get the water they need for their operations. Without the match funding, these projects are at risk of not moving forward.

Four of Central Oregon's irrigation districts have \$42 million worth of shovel ready projects that can move quickly through design, bid, and construction, and will create jobs at each stage. These infrastructure conservation projects will play a significant role in stimulating the economy. Investments in modernizing irrigation infrastructure in the Deschutes Basin create multiple economic, environmental, and resilience-oriented benefits for Central Oregon's communities.

DBBC Conservation Projects:

- Central Oregon Irrigation District: \$8.5 million
- Tumalo Irrigation District: \$735,000
- Lone Pine Irrigation District: \$600,000
- Swalley Irrigation District: \$165,000

This is a pivotal moment to help rural communities increase water reliability and restore fish and wildlife habitat, while also investing in critical infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Craig Horrell
DBBC President

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