



To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water  
Chair Helm  
Vice-Chair McLain  
Vice-Chair Owens  
Representative Cate  
Representative Marsh  
Representative Reardon  
Representative Scharf  
Representative Brock Smith  
Representative Wilde  
Representative Williams  
Representative Witt

From: Caylin Barter, Oregon Water Policy Director

Date: February 9, 2022

**RE: Support for HB 4060 -- Leverage Federal Natural Resource Funds for Maximum State Benefit**

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Wild Salmon Center is a nonprofit that works with partners to conserve healthy wild salmon fisheries across the North Pacific. In Oregon, WSC has worked for three decades to protect and restore stronghold salmon habitats, using science to drive policy, lead planning processes, and support implementation. Federal and state funding is crucial to the success of our work and the work of our partners.

**WSC supports HB 4060**, which establishes a new program to help Oregon secure federal funding that supports natural resource programs and projects. Federal natural resource funding programs are notoriously complex, making it challenging for state agencies and regional/local entities alike to apply for and administer federal funds. The recently passed federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act injects hundreds of billions of dollars into dozens of new and existing natural resource programs across numerous federal agencies – a golden opportunity to bring much-needed funds to our state, but one that we risk underutilizing due to siloing. Our 14 state natural resource agencies currently have limited coordination structures in place to facilitate identifying, applying for, and deploying federal funds that advance natural resource programs and policies. And many on-the-ground partners lack the resources needed to seek federal funds directly.

Creating dedicated state capacity for collaboration across natural resource agencies and with local partners to access relevant federal funding will help generate better outcomes for our natural resources, building the case for additional investments down the line and leveraging investments of state dollars to the greatest possible extent. We understand from the recently introduced amendments that the program is being created at the Oregon Department of Transportation, which is not viewed as a traditional natural resource agency. WSC appreciates that placing the program at ODOT can leverage that agency's existing expertise in accessing federal transportation funds, and also agrees that it makes sense to reevaluate where this program is housed in the future to ensure the program's *natural resource* focus is maximized.

Thank you for bringing this bill forward during this legislative session so that Oregon can be better equipped to land historic investments in our state's natural resources in the years ahead.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

721 NW Ninth Avenue, Suite 300 • Portland, Oregon 97209 USA • tel: 503.222.1804 • fax: 503.222.1805

[info@wildsalmoncenter.org](mailto:info@wildsalmoncenter.org) • [www.wildsalmoncenter.org](http://www.wildsalmoncenter.org)