

Submitter: Matthew Shipkey
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB775

Chair Lieber and Committee Members,

I am writing to in strong support of SB 775.

SB 775 seeks to update the eligibility rules for soil and water conservation districts so candidates for zoned seats in districts with populations of over 250,000 do not have to own or manage at least 10 acres of land. We believe this is a long overdue update to the current statute.

I reside in District 17 and am served by the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District.

The statute that limits eligible candidates for zoned seats to those who own or manage at least 10 acres does not realistically address the needs of Soil and Water districts with larger populations and significant urban considerations when making policy decisions regarding soil and water health. For those of us like myself living in urban neighborhoods it's unrealistic to believe that any of us will own or manage 10 acres of land. Having that requirement means a diversity of perspectives is not being heard from. And, when you consider the vast inequities in land ownership in OR – this requirement only serves to further the negative impact of those inequities.

SB 775 only impacts six soil and water conservation districts in Oregon because it only applies to districts with a population of over 250,000, recognizing that smaller more rural districts aren't necessarily having to deal with urban issues as they relate to soil and water health. It seems like a reasonable compromise that responds to actual needs.

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