

Submitter: Eric Butler

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB2527

This legislation is potentially game-changing for rural conservation in northwestern Oregon and beyond. It remedies a crucial mismatch between conservation and land-use incentives that will empower thousands of rural landowners to care for the biodiversity and natural resources on their lands without the penalty of losing their agriculture or forestry deferrals. By restoring the WHCMP tax deferrals, we can multiply our efforts to protect the critical species and habitats of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and close the investment gap between public and private lands--all without needing to create new administrative programs or disburse grants; indeed, by giving ODFW more discretion in monitoring requirements, and by engaging SWCDs and other conservation entities in technical assistance, HB 2527 actually promises to reduce demands on state bureaucracy. County governments, conservation organizations, and rural landowners all benefit, as does Oregon's natural heritage, so much of which exists on private working lands. Habitat conservation is widely recognized as a land-use fully as important and legitimate as forestry or agriculture; it's high time this was reflected again in our tax deferral policies.

I urge a "yes" vote on HB 2527 in order to help Oregonians protect our biodiversity, ecological resilience, and natural beauty. Conservation needs exist across the public/private divide; our policy must reflect that simple fact.