



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

2540 NE MLK JR BLVD, PORTLAND, OR 97212 • 503-719-4732 • OREGONLANDTRUSTS.ORG

February 15, 2023

To: House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

RE: Support for HB 3195

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), I thank you for the opportunity today to provide comments in support of HB 3195. This bill would expand the entities eligible for Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loans, a key source of funding to secure clean water in Oregon.

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is a network of 32 organizations working in Oregon to protect our natural world - our water, wildlife and open space - for all people, forever. Our statewide community of land trusts cover geographies from Gold Beach to Astoria, and are actively working with communities and water suppliers to protect source water areas using voluntary, market-based tools.

The CWSRF – capitalized by federal pass-through funding and state contributions – is a primary source of funding for projects that address water quality. Oregon includes land conservation addressing non-point pollution sources as eligible projects to receive CWSRF assistance.

The health and management of natural lands determines the quality of our waters and land conservation is an important tool to help remediate sources of nonpoint pollution.



24 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Mountain Land Trust • Center for Natural Lands Management • Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Forest Park Conservancy • Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust • Klamath Lake Land Trust • Lower Nehalem Community Trust • McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy • Northwest Rangeland Trust • Oregon Agricultural Trust • Oregon Desert Land Trust
Pacific Forest Trust • Southern Oregon Land Conservancy • The Conservation Fund • The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
The Trust for Public Land • The Wetlands Conservancy • Wallowa Land Trust • Western Rivers Conservancy • Wild Rivers Land Trust

8 ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Black Oregon Land Trust • Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy • Clackamas Soil & Water
Conservation District • East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District • Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District • View the Future • Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District

Land conservation that prevents contamination of drinking water sources can be a particularly impactful tool for communities to ensure clean and reliable drinking water.

While land conservation is eligible for CWSRF assistance, these types of projects have generally not been able to access funding through the program. One limiting factor is the narrow range of entities eligible to borrow under the program, which currently only includes entities that serve a pollution control function. This excludes entities such as water providers, which are often best positioned to implement land acquisition projects that address non-point sources of pollution.

As one of the only programs in Oregon that funds land acquisition projects with the purpose of addressing the quality of Oregon's drinking water sources, the CWSRF is a critical resource for communities in protecting their water supply.

The CWSRF is receiving significant additional federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law over the next several years and it is critical that Oregon remove barriers in the program to ensure communities can access this funding to protect water quality. By expanding the range of eligible entities, HB 3195 addresses one of the barriers to using the CWSRF program to implement land conservation projects with water quality benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelley Beamer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin blue rectangular border.

Kelley Beamer
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

