

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Lands and Water
On HB 3195**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

OEC supports HB 3195.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) funds projects that protect water quality. The fund is capitalized by federal pass-through funding and state contributions, and is an essential source of funds for entities across the state.

However, Oregon law limits eligible recipients for CWSRF loans to those entities that serve a pollution control function, thus limiting the scope of the Fund's effectiveness. Federal CWSRF eligibility regulations are less restrictive than Oregon's, and HB 3195 proposes to broaden state eligibility requirements to align with the federal requirements. Doing so will allow other entities, such as domestic water supply districts, to access the CWSRF. At a time when federal infrastructure dollars are flowing into fund, we want as many water quality protection projects as possible to qualify for those dollars.

There are a variety of kinds of projects that protect water quality. Some use a natural infrastructure approach, others a green infrastructure approach, and others employ traditional infrastructureⁱ. Increasing the pool of qualifying entities to include groups like water supply districts means that there is more opportunity for funding projects that provide source water quality protection through land acquisition and protective management rather than costly drinking water purification plants.

In addition, water supply districts, in particular, often serve smaller, more rural communities. These communities are traditionally under-served and under-resourced. Broadening the requirements for participating in the loan program will make more funds available for these communities.

OEC encourages you to pass HB 3195, making water quality protection available to a wider range of Oregonians.

ⁱ Natural infrastructure is the strategic use of natural lands, such as forests and wetlands, and working lands, such as farms and ranches, to meet infrastructure needs. Natural infrastructure can also mimic natural systems to achieve outcomes.

"Green infrastructure" is a subset of natural infrastructure. It mimics natural systems at the neighborhood or site scale and can be part of an integrated approach to addressing water management challenges in residential, municipal, and industrial developments. Examples of green infrastructure include eco-roofs, green street swales, and neighborhood natural areas¹ that filter sediment and other pollutants carried by stormwater runoff."

See "[Natural Infrastructure in Oregon. Common Challenges, Opportunities for Action, and Case Studies](#)". Willamette Partnership and Oregon Environmental Council. 2021. pg 6;