



February 28, 2023

To: Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Owens, and members of the committee.

Fr: Katie Ryan, Executive Director, The Wetlands Conservancy

Re: House Bill 2238 - Authorizes Rulemaking to Establish New Removal/Fill Permit Fees - Support

The Wetlands Conservancy is a 42-year-old land trust with a mission to conserve and steward Oregon's wetlands in partnership with communities. We are the only statewide organization focused on wetland health and wetland function. We stand with Oregon's goal of no net loss of wetlands and understand that wetlands are critical to everything Oregonian: rain, fog, beavers, salmon, our natural heritage and agricultural abundance. They are important for carbon sequestration, sufficient clean water, healthy fish and wildlife populations and human enjoyment.

The Wetlands Conservancy works closely with DSL, the administrative agency of the State Land Board, which oversees Oregon's public waterways, issuing authorizations for waterway leases and uses, and Oregon's Removal-Fill Law, issuing permits for projects that remove or fill materials in wetlands and waterways. There is a financial reality to these duties and DSL's recent analysis of removal-fill and wetland program operational costs and revenue show that the current structure is no longer appropriate.

The Common School Fund is heavily subsidizing removal-fill permitting. **Fees paid by permit applicants cover just 25 percent of removal-fill permit program costs.** HB 2238 will allow DSL to continue to provide exceptional service to permit applicants as well as exceptional stewardship of Oregon's waterways and wetlands, while also addressing the unacceptable financial burden removal-fill and waterway programs currently have on the Common School Fund.

The Wetlands Conservancy urges the passage HB 2238. The passage of this bill will ensure that Oregon's waters are protected and managed appropriately. Wetlands are key to a climate resilient landscape. Their work to clean water, provide adequate storage for flood waters, and provide habitat for wildlife are key to Oregon's way of life.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Ryan
Executive Director
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