

May 23, 2023

Dear members of the committee,

I am writing to urge you to move this bill forward. Currently, the rules for SWCD directors require zone directors to own at least 10 acres of land. This requirement excludes the majority of people that fund the SWCD via their taxes from participating on a SWCD board. This exclusionary rule is undemocratic and elitist, allowing only a small part of the population to participate in decisions how funds are spent and what services are provided. The rule is especially egregious in counties with large urban populations, such as Washington County where I live.

My background is in natural resources, and before I retired I worked with all of the SWCDs in the lower Willamette Valley. I would love to “give back” during retirement and serve on the board of my local SWCD. Yet, as a homeowner but not an agricultural landowner, a member of the Backyard Habitat program but not a farmer, an experienced implementer of soil and water conservation but not a grower of crops, I am ineligible to serve as a zone director.

Please change this archaic, non-inclusive, discriminatory rule.

Thank you.

Elaine Stewart, Beaverton, Oregon