

Submitter: Jane Hartline
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB775

I would to offer strong support of SB775, which changes the eligibility rules for being on Soil and Water Conservation District boards in urban areas. The current rule is that candidates for these positions have to own at least 10 acres. I have been on the board of the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation for years, and barely meet the criteria, since I own 10.75 acres. In my district, which includes the southern half of Sauvie Island and some land on the other side of the river from the island, there are very few landowners that meet that criteria, let alone people who meet the criteria AND can be talked into running for a time-consuming, volunteer board position. I feel somewhat trapped in my position because there just aren't other good people--that meet the criteria---that can be talked into running! The current rule was drafted at a time when there were lots of full-time farmers living in our area. That isn't the case now. Small acreage farmers or just non-farming landowners with small properties would be much more representative of our district and much more in tune with the kinds of conservation issues faced by small landowners than would be larger landholders and full-time farmers. Plus, our district works on urban conservation issues, such as stormwater management and invasive weeds as well as conservation issues of large farms. I hope you will take this into consideration when you decide how to vote on this bill.