



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

The Honorable Brian Helm, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
900 Court Street NE
Salem Oregon 97301

February 6, 2025

Re: Public Testimony for HB 2982

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

We are writing in support of HB 2982, that addresses Aquatic Invasive Species Response Funds. This bill will raise crucial funding for aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention outside of general state funds through changes to the aquatic invasive species boating permits. Invasive aquatic invertebrates such as the quagga and zebra mussel are an imminent threat to Oregon and this bill will provide a sustainable funding mechanism for supporting vital AIS inspection stations. Aquatic invasive species are more poised than ever to threaten Oregon's natural resource-based industries, salmon recovery efforts and economic livelihoods.

The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District is a public service district dedicated to the conservation of soil and water resources for people, wildlife and the environment. Our service territory includes Multnomah County west of the Willamette River, Sauvie Island, and a portion of the Tualatin Mountains known as Bonny Slope. One of our priority conservation goals is the prevention, early detection-rapid response and management and control of invasive species. By definition, invasive species are those introduced plants, pathogens, insects and aquatic organisms that spread rapidly due to a lack of biological controls and such spread leads to ecological, economic and social harm to people and the environment.

We work closely with agriculture, range, and forest landowners and lead watershed-level restoration projects. Among many of their impacts, zebra and quagga mussels clog irrigation equipment and should they become established, the agricultural cooperators we work with will suffer direct impacts to their irrigation infrastructure. From an ecological standpoint, these destructive mussels also catastrophically alter aquatic food web systems which threatened and endangered species, such as listed salmon, depend on. We devote many of our resources to salmon recovery efforts and these efforts are directly threatened by the potential establishment of AIS species. As a local entity, we depend on state-operated AIS inspection stations to prevent the introduction of costly, destructive aquatic invasive species.

To help prevent the establishment of aquatic invasive species in Oregon, please consider House Bill 2982.

Sincerely,

Terri Preeg Riggsby,
Chair and Zone 5 Director, West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

cc: West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors