



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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February 10th, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

RE: Support for HB 3341 - Ensuring Safe and Secure Drinking Water

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), I would like to share our strong support of H.B. 3341, a bipartisan bill that will help ensure secure and safe drinking water for communities across Oregon. **H.B. 3341 would provide an additional \$5 million for the Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP) Grant Program at the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).**

COLT is a network of 31 organizations working in Oregon to protect our natural world—our water, wildlife and open space—for all people, forever. Our statewide community of land trusts cover geographies from Gold Beach to Astoria and are actively working with communities and water suppliers to protect drinking water sources using voluntary, market-based tools.

Oregon's drinking water challenges will become more complex as our built infrastructure ages, climate change and wildfire add uncertainty, and tourism trends change with populations surges to places like the Oregon coast in the summer. The protection of drinking water sources is the most impactful way communities can ensure the quality, reliability, and resilience of their drinking water. It is also typically more cost effective and provides greater benefits than hard infrastructure investments.

The DWSP Grant Program was established by the legislature in 2023 with strong support from communities and our Coalition to provide grants for the protection,



24 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Mountain Land Trust • Center for Natural Lands Management • Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Forest Park Conservancy • Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust • Klamath Lake Land Trust • Lower Nehalem Community Trust • McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy • Northwest Rangeland Trust • Oregon Agricultural Trust • Oregon Desert Land Trust
Pacific Forest Trust • Southern Oregon Land Conservancy • The Conservation Fund • The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
The Trust for Public Land • The Wetlands Conservancy • Willowa Land Trust • Western Rivers Conservancy • Wild Rivers Land Trust
8 ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Black Oregon Land Trust • Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy • Clackamas Soil & Water
Conservation District • East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District • Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District • View the Future • Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District

restoration, or enhancement of sources of drinking water through land acquisition and conservation. The creation of the DWSP Grant Program filled a critical missing piece of this work—state funding for small communities to acquire and protect their drinking water sources. The first grant cycle for this program concluded in December 2024 and projects are currently under review.

There is robust demand for additional funds for this program. Last year, an OWEB survey of water providers and partners identified a total of \$34 million in existing project needs, with more than \$27 million in funding needs identified over the 2025-2027 biennium. Funding requests in the first grant cycle already exceed available grant funds.

As organizations with expertise in land conservation and real estate transactions, our land trust members are uniquely positioned to help water providers protect and enhance community water sources. COLT and its land trust members supported the development of the DWSP Grant Program rules and are actively supporting communities across the state in protecting their drinking water sources. Most of these communities have or plan to apply for funding through the DWSP Grant Program.

H.B. 3341 continues funding for source water protection projects across the state, which has been identified as a key piece of the 2025 Water Package investments. The DWSP Grant Program is the only state funding program specifically supporting drinking water source protection and is uniquely structured to be accessible for small and rural communities.

Oregon must continue to fund this program to ensure drinking water security. H.B. 3341 ensures continued funding for community-led efforts to protect their drinking water sources, supporting a strategic tool for long-term water security now instead of dealing with a water availability crisis later. We urge the members of this Committee to support this legislation and thank you for the time to testify.

Sincerely,



Joe Buttafuoco
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

