



February 26, 2025
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

RE: H.B. 5039 and H.B. 5040, Support for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) 2025-2027 Budget

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Levy, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

On behalf of Oregon's watershed councils, the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils ("NOWC") supports HB 5039 and HB 5040, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB) 2025-2027 budget.

NOWC supports Oregon's community-based watershed councils through capacity building, trainings, and by providing a voice with government agencies and funders. Watershed councils are led by natural resource experts and scientists and are guided by boards led by local community members. Councils restore and enhance local waters and lands for native species and for people, and they are often the backbone of the local economy in our more rural communities through the employment of contractors and other professionals to complete complex work.

OWEB is our state's main public agency supporting the conservation work completed by watershed councils. OWEB's grant administration staff ensure that funds are used effectively and efficiently, and their programmatic structures work in partnership with organizations, such as watershed councils, to successfully complete projects on the ground.

Every watershed council that receives funding from OWEB leverages their financial and technical support to bring in millions of dollars from local and federal agencies, as well as foundations and private donors. Every dollar that OWEB puts into our communities generates additional dollars and jobs that would not be possible without OWEB's support.

We ask this Committee to support the \$5 million investment in the Natural and Working Lands fund in order for our communities to invest in natural climate solutions, and continued OWEB staff for the Environmental Restoration Fund to distribute the Monsanto settlement funds.

Thank you,

Terri Preeg Riggsby
Executive Director, NOWC

