

March 19th, 2025

Joint Subcommittee On Natural Resources



Re: Please Support HB 5539: DSL Agency Budget

Dear Co-Chairs Fredrick and Levy:

Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy, members of the committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 5539, the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) 2025-27 agency budget.

I am writing in strong support of the DSL 2025-27 budget. As the Executive Director of Human Access Project (HAP), I have had the privilege of working directly with DSL staff at every level from director, senior management to the staff who consult with us to get work done to improve Oregon's waterways for people and wildlife. HAP has great respect for the culture, people and dedication of staff to fulfill DSL's mission work. Together we have accomplished a lot of positive work in Portland.

HAP is in strong support of bringing additional capacity to DSL. We are a close and frequent partner to DSL. Not having proper capacity slows down our work to turn around permits. It takes a lot of time and cost to put all the pieces together to get important work done. Time can kill projects, time is of the essence to get things done.

HAP is a nonprofit organization based in Portland, Oregon. The mission of HAP is Transforming Portland's Relationship with the Willamette River. Our vision is a City in Love with its River. HAP has one of the strongest water based nonprofit Board teams in the State of Oregon. Our role in the community is catalyzing cultural change around how people feel about and interact with the Willamette River. We want the community to view the Willamette River as an asset, something to be valued and protected. We want to foster and drive a connection between the people of Portland and the river that runs through our community. As such, our goals include improving Willamette River edge spaces for recreation, developing creative activation/programming around these spaces, fostering environmental stewardship, community investment and connection with these spaces, and identifying and removing barriers to people feeling comfortable interacting with the river. This goals are in close alignment to the values of DSL.

- Ross Island Lagoon harmful algae bloom mitigation - We have been collaborating with DSL since 2018 with our work to mitigate the Ross Island Lagoon harmful algae bloom ([HB3314](#) is an active bill to help continue this work). DSL has been at the table since the beginning of this work providing consultation, coaching and funding to support this important work.
- SLEF Grant Program - This past fall we utilized DSL SLEF funding to remove 225 derelict piles from Cathedral Park Beach in North Portland – HAP is a strong proponent of the SLEF program. To do this work we worked with DSL staff for permitting. Between 2021-2023 HAP removed 150 tons of concrete from the Cathedral Park Beach with the support of DSL.

- ADV Program - HAP has been active participant in the Transient Boater work group over the past five years. DSL is a valuable convener and leader in this space. HAP In support of utilizing the remaining ADV funds in the budget from the Monsanto settlement. This program keeps the Willamette River safe and inviting for all people and helps protect the water quality of the river.
- Lower Willamette River Management Plan - It is due time the Lower Willamette River management plan is updated to reflect increased recreational use of the Willamette River. This update and alignment to current uses and values of the river will facilitate more work to connect more people to Portland's second largest public space and natural area – the Willamette River.

Many thanks in advance for consideration of DSL's 2025-27 budget.

Sincerely,



Willie Levenson
Executive Director
Human Access Project