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March 20, 2025

Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

900 State Street NE, Room H-178
Salem OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 5539

Dear Subcommittee Members:

This letter is in support of Senate Bill 5539, which relates to the 2025-27 budget for the Department of State Lands. I have worked as a Professional Wetland Scientist in Oregon for the past 35 years. During that time, I have been impressed with the level of professionalism and dedication that Department of State Lands staff and leadership have shown. I understand the important role the Department plays in managing our natural resources and educating the public. Technology, regulations, and our scientific understanding are constantly changing, requiring a robust budget to ensure the public and our natural resources are well served.

With the current turmoil in Washington D.C., it is imperative state governments have their house in order, and that programs and services are sufficiently funded. I have reviewed the list of policy packages in the proposed budget and want to highlight several. While I think all should be funded at the level that has been identified, Package 201 (Protecting Wetlands and Waterways), Package 205 (Resources for GIS), Packages 500 and 502 (Housing Production), Package 204 (Modern Permitting and Information System), and Package 213 (Lower Willamette River Management Plan) are ones that I routinely interact with.

Ensuring the Department of State Lands is well funded is vital, which is why I support their 2025-27 budget (SB 5539).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John van Staveren".

John van Staveren
President, Senior Professional Wetland Scientist