



March 28, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

RE: SB 85 Neighborhood Protection Cooperative Grant Program - Support

Chair Golden and members of the Committee:

OACD represents the 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) statewide, which are special districts with elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil and water quality and habitat through voluntary conservation in partnership with rural and urban landowners and managers. The Districts both provide technical assistance and are project implementers. They help landowners translate their conservation goals into practices and projects.

We are writing in support of SB 85; promoting wildfire resilience in communities is a high priority action. There are SWCDs around the state who have been focusing efforts on wildfire resilience around homesteads. Sadly, these efforts are often a part of recovering from previous fires. Proactive approaches to wildfire resilience as supported by this legislation would be even better.

We humbly offer some suggestions that we feel would clarify the intent of the bill as follows:

- Clarifying the types of practices that are intended to be covered by the program. We would like to see a focus on lands surrounding homesites and other infrastructure.
- Criteria for the grant awards should recognize the important related benefits of wildfire resilience projects, namely improvement of natural resources conditions and functions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Kreiner".

Andrea Kreiner, Executive Director
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