

Dear Members of the Commission,

I am providing written comment to OERC for the January 22 meeting. I do not wish to make a verbal comment.

Oregon Coast Alliance is an Oregon nonprofit corporation whose mission is protection of coastal natural resources, strengthening community livability and working with coastal residents on land use advocacy. We also have a longstanding concern for the budget situation of the Parks and Recreation Department, whose needs are great and ever-expanding for maintenance and upkeep of the large state park system, and numerous historic sites all across Oregon.

We write today concerning potential use of the OERF funds for state agency projects, which is the purpose of one of the sub-funds. The Parks Department has some longstanding construction/restoration needs for which the Monsanto funds would be a good fit. They have not developed these ideas in detail yet, since the application process is not open at this time.

But ORCA in this comment wants to essentially put in a placeholder for the Parks Department as an agency that could use these monies to good effect in parks that need important projects to be initiated or completed. The agency can provide further information about such projects upon request.

Thank you for your time.

Cameron

—

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COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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January 20th, 2026

RE: Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund Engagement

Co-Chair Sams, Co-Chair Dembrow, and Vice-Chair Holliday:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today at the January meeting of the Oregon Environmental Restoration Council. COLT and our members are excited to track the development of the Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund and the impact its investments will have for communities across Oregon.

COLT is a membership organization representing 31-member land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and conservation organizations working to protect our habitat, water, and natural spaces - for all people, forever. Collectively, our members have protected more than 780,000 acres of land across our state.

As the Council moves forward in shaping programmatic priorities for the State Agency Program Fund and designing a new grant program for the Community Impact Fund, **we hope for sustained collaboration and engagement with the conservation community to help guide investments toward the programs and communities of greatest need.**

Land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, watershed councils, and Tribes are the key implementing partners on the ground already working in partnership with local communities to build land, water, and community resilience. These entities have critical insight into priority investments needs and areas, and which projects and programs would deliver co-benefits for human health and our ecosystems.

This Fund also offers a historic opportunity to strengthen our ecosystems and communities at a time when investment is needed most. Uncertainty around federal funding, a down state revenue forecast, and rescinded federal funds have led to significant cuts in natural resources programs and staff across the state.



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 • Wallowa 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

At the same time, there is great demand for additional investment in land protection, stewardship, restoration, wildfire resilience, working lands protection, and sustained funding for “one-time” programmatic investments:

- The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) received \$2 million for grants for the 2025-2027 biennium, despite a projected demand of \$17 million for the program. This funding may now be rescinded in the 2026 legislative session;
- The Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program received no additional funding for communities to protect drinking water sources, despite nearly \$15 million in projected need for the biennium and a \$10 million projected need for the 2027-2029 biennium (based on OWEB surveying June 2024 and follow up outreach in September 2025);
- The Natural and Working Lands Fund received no additional grant funding for the biennium despite over \$6 million in demand for just the OWEB grant fund opportunities through the program (conservation management plans and open solicitation);
- The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund received no additional funding for the 2025-2027 biennium;
- Failure of passing the 1.25% for Wildlife bill in the 2025 legislation session, which would have provided funding to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to support non-game species conservation; and
- Despite securing a sustained source of funding for wildfire mitigation and suppression (estimated at \$43 million through H.B. 3940), it is not enough to meet the \$280 million/biennium need.

These bullet points represent just a few examples of programs which would benefit from investments of the Environmental Restoration Fund.

Thank you for your service on this Council and your commitment to ensuring benefit for Oregon’s environment and communities across the state.

Sincerely,



Joe Buttafuoco
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

