

Charter for the Advocacy Committee of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD)

Approved by the Board of Directors on November 30, 2023

The Committee is authorized by the OACD Board of Directors (Board) to function as a standing committee and actively participate in legislative and regulatory processes on behalf of its members, carrying a message that reflects membership needs and priorities. It is intended that advocacy efforts achieve results and provide excellent two-way communications with members and partners.

Committee Members

The Board shall appoint a Chair to lead the Committee. The Chair is not required to be a member of the Board.

The Board shall appoint a Board Liaison to monitor the work of the Committee, make sure that the directions in this charter are being followed and to assist with communications. The Board Liaison shall be a member of the Board.

Committee members shall self-identify, committing to a minimum of 50% attendance at committee meetings and a willingness to take on assignments as necessary. Any directors and staff of OACD member Districts can request committee information and participate in meetings but will not be eligible to vote unless they have declared as a committee member and met the 50% attendance requirement.

Key Participants

The Committee shall work with the following key participants:

- Board: The Committee shall report to the Board and be accountable for implementing Board direction.
- OACD's NACD Representatives: These representatives will have access to federal advocacy efforts and there should be two-way communications with the OACD Committee so that issues, positions, and actions are shared.

- **Members:** OACD members must receive timely information from the Committee and must be able to provide input to the Committee by identifying issues and voicing their opinions and concerns. As needed, members should participate in advocacy efforts through actions such as making contact with legislators and other officials and providing testimony and letters.
- **Partners:** The Committee shall coordinate advocacy efforts with partners including but not limited to the Partnership (OACD, NOWC, COLT, OCEAN), federal (NRCS) and state (ODA & OWEB) agencies, and other associations sharing natural resource issues.

Responsibilities

The Committee shall:

- Identify important issues by tracking agency and legislative initiatives, through coordination with other associations and agency partners, and through input from OACD members.
- Research relevant issues.
- Lead the development of position statements to guide advocacy efforts and submit proposed changes to the OACD Board for approval.
- Prepare and deliver oral and written testimony and supporting documents for legislative and regulatory forums.
- Advocate and participate in regulatory forums representing the needs of OACD members.
- Lead the development and delivery of advocacy training conducted by OACD for its members. This responsibility is contingent on sufficient resources, including but not limited to funding to contracts for services.
- Prioritize advocacy efforts to fit with available resources.

Furthermore, the committee shall make sure that communications are effective with key participants on relevant issues through the website, emails, conference calls, Board meetings, conferences and workshops, and other means. Important topics of communication include:

- Training opportunities
- Actions to update and approve position statements
- Current legislative and regulatory activity and OACD's responses

- New laws and regulations that affect members
- Calls for action to perform tasks such as contacting officials, testifying at hearings, and preparing letters.

Decision Making

The Committee shall follow protocols associated with the OACD position statements.

The Committee shall strive for consensus decisions. If consensus is not possible, decisions shall be made by majority vote.

The ED and chair are empowered to make decisions when full committee participation is not practical or essential.

Signatory Authority

Written testimony shall typically be signed by the Executive Director. The Committee Chair or Board President may sign testimony in the absence of the Executive Director, if they are serving as a lead on a topic, or if the Chair's or President's signature serves a strategic purpose.

Restricted Activities

The Committee shall not participate in political campaigning (actions subject to a vote of the public such as ballot measures) without specific authorization from the Board. For example, in the past OACD engaged in political campaigning by supporting two ballot measures creating OWEB as an agency and funding OWEB permanently from lottery dollars.

State statute requires a person who meets lobbyist registration thresholds to register with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission and for their employer to file quarterly reports with the Commission. Committee members should be aware of these requirements and take appropriate actions if thresholds are exceeded.