**Working with OACD on Advancing Legislation**

This document provides guidance on how to work with OACD on advancing legislation. It is focused on the Oregon legislative process, but also has applicability to Federal legislation. OACD can assist in similar ways on making changes to regulations (rules).

**Phase 1 – Define the “Ask”**

The first step is to define and understand the problem that needs to be addressed and how this might be accomplished. Consider alternative solutions including the following:

* Do nothing, live with the existing situation, and work around the problems as best possible.
* Pursue solutions in association with state agencies and others outside of the legislative process. Agencies may be able to make fixed through rulemaking.
* Address the problem through legislation.

OACD can assist with defining the ask. This may start through discussions with the OACD Executive Director or members of the OACD Advocacy Committee. It may also start by completing and submitting “OACDs Legislative or Rulemaking Issues Submittal” form. This form is available on the OACD website. The form asks you to tell OACD what the issue is and why it’s important to your district, whether it’s regarding a rule or a law, and who you think might be opposed.  It is best to receive these forms several months before the legislative session because OACD needs time to research the issues and

legislators have deadlines for introducing legislation.

OACD will investigate the issue, help to further define the issue, and identify potential solutions with the intent of coming up with a recommended path forward. Consideration will be given to the following:

* Urgency and importance of fixing the problem
* The level of effort and resources required to move forward
* The likelihood of success
* Possible unintended consequences
* Possible allies and opponents
* Applicability to Oregon SWCDs and consistency with OACD positions

If the recommended solution is a legislative change, it will be important to identify the statute that needs to be changed and have specific language for the change.

**Phase 2 – Make a Plan**

It will be necessary to form a team and create a plan to move forward. The team may include OACD, members of OACD, and partners with similar interests. There should be a clear understanding among the team members on who is leading the effort, their roles and responsibilities, and the resources that each can bring to table.

The plan should account for the following:

* Secure sponsors, legislators that could carry the issue forward ;and get them engaged
* Create support for the change among legislators and other interested parties
* Be sure to keep your local legislators informed on the issue.
* Determine pathways through committees in the legislature.
* Schedule timing for moving forward through the various steps

Some parts of the plan may best be facilitated by OACD.

It is important to recognize that legislative change can take work over several sessions.

**Phase 3 – Prepare Reference Materials**

To move almost any issue forward through the legislative process it will be necessary to effectively communicate on what needs to be changed and why. This communication needs to be targeted towards legislators who will be voting on the action. In many cases rallying support among SWCDs and other stakeholders will also be necessary.

The reference materials might include flyers and issue papers. Case studies can also be helpful in making the issue meaningful.

**Phase 4 – Engage**

This is the phase for implementing the plan.

OACD may assist with the following:

* Arranging and participating in meetings with legislative sponsors, legislative committee staff, committee chairs and others
* Preparing and submitting the request for legislation to a sponsor for legislative counsel to prepare a draft law
* Working with the agencies who would be affected by the change including effects on their budgets, policies, and work
* Tracking the actions in the legislative process
* Preparing and delivering testimony in the legislative proceedings
* Communicating with OACD members, partners, and others

SWCDs with an interest in moving forward should do the following:

* Prepare and deliver testimony in legislative proceedings
* Keep your own Representatives and Senators in the loop as the process moves forward
* Follow through with appreciation to legislative staff, legislators or agency staff who assisted you.