Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 11, 2026

Colton Buckley
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Buckley:

We are writing to urge you to honor the commitments of USDA NRCS and disburse the remaining $531,050 of its award to the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District (TSWCD) for work performed to improve fish habitat in Washington County, Oregon.

TSWCD and NRCS have had a productive partnership helping residents of Washington County voluntarily conserve soil, water, air, forest, and habitat resources. In 2022, TSWCD applied to NRCS for funding to improve habitat for aquatic organisms, including steelhead trout, a threatened species. The project replaced old, deteriorated, and improperly designed culverts with bridges and culverts that meet modern fish passage criteria; and revegetated the adjacent riverside areas with native trees and shrubs.

In February 2024, NRCS approved funding for this project and obligated $1,074,887 to address five identified barriers that impeded aquatic organism migration. As of the date of this letter, NRCS has only paid $543,837 of the total amount. The shortfall in funds has severely challenged TSWCD's budget and ultimately harms the taxpayers of Washington County.

USDA NRCS must honor its commitment and complete the investment it promised Washington County, Oregon. We urge you to finalize the disbursement of the total award immediately. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator