

# Bob Sallinger

**#331484 | February 18, 2022**

## Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Environmental Overlay Zone Map Correction Project, Recommended Draft**

February 16, 2022 Dear Mayor Wheeler and Portland City Council, I am writing on behalf of Audubon Society of Portland and our 17,000 members in the Portland Metro Area in strong support of Council Adoption of the Environmental Zone (Ezone) Map Overlay Correction Project. Environmental zones provide the regulatory backbone to protecting natural resources, protecting the public from natural hazards and mitigating the impacts of climate. Our Ezones protect critical natural resources such as streams, wetlands, forests, steep slopes and wildlife habitat inside the City. Since 1989, Portland has utilized environmental zones (Ezones) to protect these types of natural features. However, much of the mapping is decades old. Over the past three years, the City has utilized modern technology such as LiDAR to update the is maps. The process to date to update the environmental zone maps has gone through a remarkable 11 hearings and work sessions before the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) and was subjected to more than 800 staff site visits to ensure accuracy. This project is not about creating new policies—it is simply about ensuring that protections are accurately applied to natural resources where they exist. While this is kind of “wonky” stuff, accurately mapping and applying natural resource protections is foundational to protecting our environment. It is absurd to use long outdated maps, when new much more accurate mapping exists. It is critical that the City move forward expeditiously with adoption of these updated maps. Updated Ezone maps are needed to replace the existing inaccurate maps and allow the CIty to meet its own natural resource protection policies. This project will simply ensure Portland's long-standing natural resource protections will be applied correctly and as intended. Protecting Portland's streams, wetlands, steep slopes, forests/woodlands, and wildlife habitat has never been more important. Given the climate crisis, we know that flooding, landslides, and wildfires are becoming more frequent and intense. The updated Ezone maps will help mitigate the climate crisis by better protecting its streams, floodplains, wetlands, and forest/woodlands, which in turn sequester carbon, mitigate flooding and landslides impacts, and help cool and purify air and water, and provide habitat for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife. This project reflects substantial public investment and unprecedented "boots on the ground" and connection with property owners. This project has been a huge investment for the city and the community. For more than three years the staff went to meet with Portlanders at their own meetings, and conducted more than 800 site visits to individual properties where property owners and staff conferred about the effort and the natural resources on the site. Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Respectfully,  
Bob Sallinger Conservation Director Audubon Society of Portland

Testimony is presented without formatting.