

Union County Cattlemen  
61931 Cottonwood Rd.  
La Grande, OR 97850  
April 12,2013

Senate Environment and Natural Resource Committee  
900 Court St. NE Rm 347  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Senate Bill SB 401

Chair Dingfelder and Committee Members:

Union County Cattlemen strongly opposes SB 401. The Oregon Omnibus National Wild and Scenic River Act was passed in 1988 , which remains the largest river protection legislation in the nation's history when the act selected 40 rivers and 1500 river miles for the National Wild and Scenic River system in Oregon. These rivers are fully regulated through the Federal Endangered Species Act and Oregon statutes governing land management for Clean Water, endangered species, and critical habitat for aquatic wildlife. We do not think further protections are necessary. It is unreasonable to put protective, non-use regulations on stream segments where limitations are already in place to retain the quality and quantity of scenic and resource values Oregonians fully intend to protect for future generations.

Burdensome regulations and prohibitions for the rivers in Oregon has serious impacts to many other activities that citizens conduct for their livelihood. Society in the state as a whole is rarely represented by the special interest groups and bills SB 401 promotes a vision satisfactory to a small interest while limiting the vision of the larger interest. We urge the legislature to consider this bill carefully and avoid setting up a new contentious issue within the state.

Land exchanges may sound good while viewing the idea from Salem, but an exchange within the extended context of federal or private land can be confounded by numerous factors. A private property exchange under the Scenic River Act diminishes Oregon's promise to honor private property and citizen's freedom to enjoy a livelihood and healthy environment without government interference. The beauty of Oregon's waterways has attracted many generations to volunteer their time, resources, and energy to preserving the quality for their children and grandchildren. Times have not changed in that respect and in fact most are working even harder today to ensure what we have now will be here tomorrow.

There is no evidence that past designations have preserved the natural setting and water quality of the streams. The Grande Ronde River has been listed on the water quality limited 303(d) list since the mid 1990s and ODEQ has not revisited the issue to identify that the "scenic" category in the lower section is no longer limited. The proposal to designate more river segments as "wild and scenic" doubles-up on regulations and

laws that protect and preserve the waterways and further designations on any of the Oregon rivers or creeks is redundant.

We urge a no vote on SB 401.

Sincerely,

Union County Cattlemen

Dennis Murchison, President  
Jason Beck, Vice-President  
Pat Larson, Secretary