

April 16, 2013

Senator Floyd Prozanski
Senate Judiciary Committee

Subject: Support for SB 713

I am the chairman of the Oregon Association of Shooting Ranges which consists of twenty-six of the largest ranges in Oregon, and 16,500 members. The vast majority of Oregon's shooting ranges were built within ten years of WW II, have been grandfathered as to zoning, and are thriving. These ranges are used for training by law enforcement, hunter education, Boy Scouts, U.S. military, etc., in addition to competitive and recreational shooting

However, we have a range problem in Oregon. The only zoning where a new range can be built as a conforming use today is in exclusive forestry. Because of this, it would be almost impossible to build a new range in much of the state today. We have recently lost a three year fight in Tillamook County to convert some terrible farm land to forestry in order to build an outdoor rifle range. Surprisingly, there is not a single rifle or pistol range in Tillamook County, yet perhaps half the adult male population is a deer or elk hunter.

Per the BATF, U.S. firearms and ammunition sales are at all-time record highs and they will probably stay that way for some time. There are people buying firearms today that would not have considered doing so perhaps five years ago. Our problem is that our existing ranges are reaching membership saturation and being capped. Also, there are no public ranges in Oregon. Where do we want these new gun owners to shoot and learn to shoot safely? We already have problems with people shooting on public property and trespass shooting. This haphazard shooting is often very unsafe and out of control.

The Oregon range association has requested this legislation that would permit building firearms training facilities on most resource lands. These ranges would have to meet regulatory, safety and environmental requirements unlike trespass shooting, and is supported by law enforcement, Dept. of Fish and Game, Dump Stoppers, and many others. This is a public safety issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

.Sincerely,

George Pitts, Chairman
Oregon Assn. of Shooting Ranges
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