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March 19, 2013

The Honorable John A. Kitzhaber, Governor
State Capital Building
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:


The purpose of this letter is to express my strong support for HB 3098, a bill that will allow for further development of the Young Life Washington Family Ranch, a youth camp located in Oregon's Wasco and Jefferson Counties. The 64,000 acre, 160 square mile property, formerly known as the Big Muddy Ranch, is located in the high desert of Central Oregon. On December 31, 1997, our family donated the Big Muddy Ranch to Young Life for the purpose of having a positive impact on adolescents through Young Life's non-denominational Christian ministry. Since 1997, we have financially supported the ranch by remodeling and removing buildings, installing pools and a pond, and renovating an 88,000 square foot building into a sports complex to accommodate summer high school campers. In 2008, our family invested \$35 million to create a second camp for middle school youth; in 2011, the new facility, Creekside, welcomed its first campers. During an 11 week period throughout each summer, youth from all over the world attend the camp. Nearly 11,000 campers will visit Young Life Washington Family Ranch this summer, making it one of the largest youth camps in the world.

I support HB 3098 because it helps to create a transparent and predictable pathway forward for further development at the Young Life Washington Family Ranch. Currently, no reliable, effective and efficient means of achieving this goal exists. Equally as important, the bill contains provisions for a local process and local approvals which are the hallmarks of the citizen involvement provisions of Oregon land use law.

Furthermore, the authors of HB 3098 have crafted a bill that will ensure careful placement of the proposed new camps in locations that will not create conflicts with farm uses. As planned, the total potential build-out area (less than 400 acres) represents less than one percent of the total 64,000 acre property.

The Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation and our family are passionate about wanting to create a welcoming camping environment where young people can experience the "best week of their lives". We would encourage you and the Oregon legislature to support HB 3098 to achieve our mutual goal of helping young people achieve the tools they need to be successful. We are prepared to fund a significant project, similar to the Creekside project, at the Young Life Washington Family Ranch as soon as a pathway is cleared to begin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dennis R. Washington" followed by a stylized monogram or initials.

Dennis R. Washington
Owner
The Washington Companies