

John W. Castles
11725 SW Lynnridge Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97225

June 10, 2013

Representative Ben Unger
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, H-377
Salem, Oregon 97301

Senator Chris Edwards
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, S-405
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: HB 3098-A, Youth Camps Bill

Gentlemen:

I am writing to you in support of House Bill 3098-A, Youth Camps Bill. I am a native Oregonian and serve as a Trustee of the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, Vancouver, WA. The Murdock Trust was established by the will of the late Jack Murdock, co-founder of Tektronix. As you may be aware, Tektronix was incorporated in Oregon in 1946, and was the leading manufacturer of test and measurement equipment for the electronics industry worldwide. As the first high technology company in Oregon post-World War II, Tektronix became the largest company and largest employer in the state and helped establish the "Silicon Forest" in Oregon for many other technology companies. Today, the Silicon Forest of high tech companies comprises the largest industrial sector in the state of Oregon.

Following Jack Murdock's tragic death in a float plane accident on the Columbia River, the Murdock Trust began operating in 1975. Serving a 5-state region of the Pacific Northwest, the Murdock Trust provides grant money to nonprofits in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. Each year the Murdock Trust awards grants totaling of \$35 - \$40 million to a couple hundred nonprofits in our region.

The demand for grant money from nonprofits in our region is enormous. As a consequence, our assessment and evaluation process for awarding grants is highly competitive and extremely rigorous. While most nonprofits are worthy, we can only make about 100 or 200 grants per year. In essence, we invest in excellence. That is why I am writing in support of this

House Bill because it impacts one of our current grantees, Young Life's Washington Family Ranch, and potentially additional youth camps in Oregon in the future.

At the Murdock Trust, we believe that Young Life is the most experienced operator of youth camps in the U.S. Young Life camps have the finest programs, staff, food and services of any youth camps in America. Since our inception, the Murdock Trust has funded approximately 40 – 50% of all the youth camps in our Pacific Northwest region. Young Life camps stand out head and shoulders over the rest of the youth camps in the Northwest.

Located in the high desert country of central Oregon, Young Life's Washington Family Ranch is the premiere youth camp in the country. We know of no other youth camp on par with this one. Comprised of almost 64,000 acres, they have the finest facilities of any camp anywhere in the U.S. Young Life focuses on faith, character development and life skills. The Washington Family Ranch serves thousands of high school and middle school students each summer.

The Murdock Trust classifies youth organizations into 3 segments: Prevention, Early Intervention, and Crisis Intervention. We classify Young Life camps in the Prevention and Early Intervention segment. Focusing on faith, character and personal relationships, Young Life provides transformative programs to high school and middle school students from all around the western U.S. As you know when you think about overextended social service agencies in Oregon and bulging prison populations, preventative programs cost society much less than programs for crisis intervention and recovery. Programs like Young Life and others can save billions of dollars in societal costs down the road.

In line with the quality and excellence of its youth programs, the Murdock Trust has awarded 4 grants totaling over \$4 million to Young Life's Washington Family Ranch. The State of Oregon and its citizens can be immensely proud of the Washington Family Ranch. Rising out of the dust of the failed Rajneeshee cult that preceded them on the property, Young Life's Washington Family Ranch is a wonderful story of redemption and hope for thousands of kids every year.

As I understand it, this House Bill affects any and all youth camps that desire to build camps in Exclusive Farm Zone properties east of the Cascades. Currently it would affect Young Life as they desire to build a third camp on their Washington Family Ranch property in central Oregon but it might also impact other youth camps in the future. On behalf of a major funder of youth camps, I respectfully ask for your support and passage of HB 3098-A.

Sincerely,

John W. Castles
Trustee, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

Cc: The Honorable Mark Hass
Mr. Rich Ellerd
Mr. Craig Kilpatrick