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House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

April 8, 2015

Re HB 3417: Legislation re Regional Solutions public notice and comment period.

Central Oregon LandWatch is a nonprofit conservation group based in Bend, Oregon. We strive to achieve a balanced and integrated approach to land use planning in Central Oregon that safeguards our natural resources while fostering socially and economically thriving communities. Our staff and/or members attend Regional Solutions meetings in the Central Region.

We believe that public engagement in the decision-making process is essential to a functioning and healthy democracy. The principles guiding the Regional Solutions Network embody this basic tenet.

- *Transparency and Accountability: Decisions take place in the public eye.*
- *Equity and Inclusiveness: All interests who are needed and willing contribute to the solution.*
- *Effectiveness and Efficiency: Solutions are tested to make sure they make practical sense.*
- *Responsiveness: Public concerns are authentically addressed.*
- *Forum Neutrality: Different perspectives are welcome; the process itself has no bias.*

HB 3417 requires that the public be afforded a minimum notice of 30 days for upcoming meetings, along with the opportunity to comment during that 30-day period. Central Oregon LandWatch supports HB 3417. It will help put Regional Solution's principles into effect by ensuring that the public has adequate opportunity to learn about and engage in local decision-making that affects all of us.

We further urge that Regional Solutions committees include a seat at the table for "Natural Resources" representation. For example, the major economic drivers in Central Oregon are tourism, hotels, and recreation.* The natural resources that support these industries need to be taken into consideration as part of the regional planning process.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Director

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* See: Value of Natural Resources: Deschutes River Corridor and Its Water, A University of Michigan Study for Trout Unlimited, April 19, 2011.

P. 3 “The report assessed three types of benefits: direct revenue to the Central Oregon economy from agriculture, tourism, recreation, hotels, and real estate; indirect revenue to economies outside of Central Oregon from commercial salmon fishing and travel expenditures to get to Central Oregon; and additional benefits including job creation to Central Oregon and expressed value of the goods and services people receive from the river for free.

“The study finds that \$40.2 million in agricultural revenue, \$53.4 million tourism revenue, \$5.2 million in recreational revenue, \$15.1 million in hotel revenue, and \$20.8 million in economic value to real estate sales are directly attributable to the river. Outside of Central Oregon, tourists spend \$26.2 million to travel to the region and commercial salmon fishing benefits with \$1.8 million in revenues from the Lower Deschutes salmon hatcheries. Total economic value created by the river to the six industries annually, the sum of market and expressed values, is \$185.2 million.”

