



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of State Lands

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 100

Salem, OR 97301-1279

(503) 986-5200

FAX (503) 378-4844

www.oregon.gov/dsl

**Testimony of
Bill Ryan, Assistant Director
Aquatic Resource Management Program
Department of State Lands
on
Senate Bill 544
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
April 8, 2015**

State Land Board

Kate Brown
Governor

Jeanne P. Atkins
Secretary of State

Ted Wheeler
State Treasurer

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 544. For the record, my name is Bill Ryan, and I'm the assistant director of the Aquatic Resource Management Program in the Department of State Lands (DSL). I am testifying today because DSL regulates removal and fill in Oregon's wetlands and waterways, and we administer authorizations for voluntary restoration projects.

Oregon has had a very successful track record with these types of projects. In fact, the state is a national leader in encouraging voluntary restoration through our various streamlined permit processes, and through other efforts such as grant funding provided by OWEB.

ORS 496.270 currently includes limits on liability to encourage landowners to implement voluntary restoration of Oregon wetlands and waterways. DSL is concerned the proposed language changes in Senate Bill 544 would have a negative effect on landowners who want to improve habitat and water quality by developing restoration projects on their property.

The Department of State Lands' permit program already requires checks and balances to prevent negative effects on adjacent property from permitted activities. We often require hydrologic or other analyses by engineers to certify there will not be significant negative effects. Though we've heard concerns expressed by adjacent landowners, we have not actually seen adverse effects "in the field" from restoration projects.

DSL believes it is important to continue the discussion about voluntary restoration projects in Oregon, and how they may interact with working lands throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 544, and I would be happy to answer any questions.