JEANNE P. ATKINS
SECRETARY OF STATE

ROBERT TAYLOR
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water
Public Hearing on HB 3474
April 16, 2015

Testimony of Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne P. Atkins

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

I write to you in support of HB 3474 as a member of the State Land Board. As you know, the Land Board oversees the Common School Fund and state lands dedicated to providing revenue for the fund. Under its constitutional trust obligations, the Land Board has a responsibility to manage Common School Fund lands "to attain the greatest benefit for the schools, consistent with the conservation of the lands under sound techniques of land management."[1]

In recent years, however, litigation and compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act have significantly restricted timber harvests from Common School Fund Lands, thereby reducing revenue to the Fund. The Land Board has faced and expects to continue to face challenges in managing some Common School Fund forest lands in a manner that is consistent with the Land Board's fiduciary obligation to maximize Fund revenues.

For this reason, I support HB 3474, which gives the Land Board one more tool to help it meet its trust obligations. Notably, HB 3474 does not restrict the ability of the Land Board to sell or transfer lands in any manner otherwise provided for by law. In addition, the legislation does not require the Land Board to take any particular action with respect to the trust lands it oversees. I hope this Committee will join me in supporting this legislation.

Finally, I want to thank Senator Roblan and Representatives McKeown and Read for their leadership in developing this legislation, and for involving a wide range of stakeholders in the process.

Sincerely,

Jeanne P. Atkins
Oregon Secretary of State

---

[1] 46 Or. Op. Atty Gen. 468, 478 (1992).