DATE:　　　　　　FEBRUARY 16, 2016

TO:　　　　　　　SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND REVENUE

FROM:　　　　　　STACY MICHAELSON, ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES

SUBJECT:　　　　　SB 1545

Chair Hass, Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Stacy Michaelson, Policy Manager with the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). With all 36 counties being members of AOC, we are the collective voice for county boards in Oregon. At this time, AOC is opposed to SB 1545.

While we understand the sponsors' desire to ensure a variety of service delivery to children – and support that goal – we have concerns about the proposed method for achieving that aim. Special districts can be complex matters, with the potential for unintended consequences in other vital areas of local governments' budgets. They have their appropriate uses; however, the structure laid out in this bill gives us great pause.

Special districts fall into one of two categories – either they are run by the county/ies that form them, or they have their own elected governing body. The way that SB 1545 is drafted, the potential special district would have its own board, but would still receive administrative services via county staff. This is not how our current structure works, and it would be costly and complicated to provide these sorts of services to an entity not run by the county.

Finally, while we appreciate having special districts as a potential tool, we do prefer to reserve them for instances of necessity. Despite valuing the goal of providing additional children's services, it seems that there are existing avenues for this work to take place. At this time, it is not clear to us that the special district as described in this bill is the most appropriate means to providing the desired additional services. Even if it were determined to be the best solution, there would remain details that would require a closer eye than we believe there is time for during this short legislative session.

For the above reasons, we are opposed to SB 1545 passing in the 2016 session and would ask that the discussion be tabled for now. Thank you.