



# OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

## Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

I am Al Elkins representing the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA). I am here today to support SB 847.

The public lands of Oregon are vital not only as an income source for schools but the inherent values of public recreational use, watershed and wildlife conservation and a legacy to future generations. Western States which were granted school trust lands have a varied history of retaining those lands. It is our understanding that the state of Nevada now has less than 1/10 of 1 percent of the 27 million acres of grant land. The transfer of trust land is much more in Oregon's overall public interests than liquidating the lands for short term profit.

OHA adopted a position several years ago, that in part stated "OHA is opposed to any transfer of public lands that would endanger access for recreational users". From our reading of current sale documents of the Elliott Forest if the sale is approved there would be a 50 % reduction in public access. Is a short-term profit on land sales more important than the loss of access to public land for recreationalists? OHA does not believe so, nor would many citizens of our state.

In closing we support SB 847 because it provides a good framework for a coordinated transfer of lands in Oregon. We do not want the recent two to one vote by the State Land Board to the highest bidder for land to determine the way of treating our public lands in Oregon. We need SB 847 to help us keep a reasonable balance with our precious public lands.

That concludes my testimony, OHA appreciates the opportunity to express our concerns, I will be glad to answer any questions.