

House Joint Memorial 11

Sponsored by Representative SMITH DB, Senators KNOPP, KRUSE; Senators BOQUIST, MANNING JR, OLSEN, ROBLAN, THATCHER

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges President and Congress to pursue Oregon and California Railroad grant land management reforms.

JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United
3 States of America, in Congress assembled:

4 We, your memorialists, the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legis-
5 lative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

6 Whereas the revested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands, commonly known as O&C
7 lands, which are managed predominantly by the Bureau of Land Management, were once privately
8 owned but were returned to federal ownership in 1916 and now constitute more than 2.4 million
9 acres of legally unique federal lands that are intended to be used for sustained yield timber pro-
10 duction, to produce revenues that are shared with counties and to create and sustain jobs in rural
11 Oregon communities; and

12 Whereas O&C lands once provided revenues vital to the economic survival of many county
13 governments in Oregon; and

14 Whereas the O&C Act of 1937, which governs the bureau's management of O&C lands, states
15 that all the timberlands shall be managed for sustained yield production and also mandates a mini-
16 mum harvest each year of 500 million board feet; and

17 Whereas timber harvests have been reduced by 90 percent over the last two decades, which has
18 resulted in a drastic decline in revenues from those lands and left many of the 18 Oregon counties
19 in which O&C lands are located without adequate revenues to provide essential public services and
20 employment opportunities; and

21 Whereas because of the loss of federal timber sales revenue, the counties have suffered a peril-
22 ous loss of jobs and infrastructure due to sawmill and peeling mill closures and the disappearance
23 of other forest-based industries and have been forced to lay off law enforcement officers and public
24 health providers and mental health providers, close county correctional facilities and dramatically
25 reduce all other county services; and

26 Whereas the bureau has signed a Record of Decision finalizing the new Resource Management
27 Plans for Western Oregon that further limit sustainable, active management of O&C lands and limit
28 the ability of counties to provide public services required under the O&C Act of 1937; and

29 Whereas the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 expired Sep-
30 tember 30, 2015, leaving counties to rely on shared timber receipts from O&C lands—at an 86 per-
31 cent reduction from the historical payment average; and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 Whereas the transfer of services from financially distressed counties to the State of Oregon will
2 adversely affect public education, human services and other state-supported services; and

3 Whereas a much higher level of timber harvest than is planned by the bureau's new resource
4 management plans can be achieved while still providing for the recovery of endangered species, in-
5 creasing carbon storage and providing clean water, fish habitat and a wide range of recreational
6 opportunities; and

7 Whereas members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation have proposed plans that would re-
8 sult in stable county revenues in an effort to avoid the financial crises currently confronting many
9 Oregon counties and assist in the revival of the ailing economies in the 18 O&C counties; now,
10 therefore,

11 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

12 That we, the members of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly, urge the President and the
13 Congress of the United States of America to reform federal management of revested Oregon and
14 California Railroad grant lands to provide certainty and predictability to Oregon counties in which
15 O&C lands are located; and be it further

16 Resolved, That a copy of this memorial with original signatures shall be sent to the President
17 of the United States and to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

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