



**Together. For Oregon's Land.**

February 7, 2018

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
Representative Ken Helm, Chair  
House Energy and Environment Committee

**Testimony for SB 1507 and HB 4001, Clean Energy Jobs**

Dear Chair Dembrow, Chair Helm, and Committee Members,

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) applauds the State of Oregon for taking action to address greenhouse gas emissions and the threat of climate change. As the voice for the land trust community of Oregon, COLT speaks on behalf of 19 non-profit organizations that work with willing private landowners to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, conserve open lands, maintain working farms and forests, and retain the values that make Oregon unique. The effects of climate change can already be felt in Oregon, to the detriment of our natural habitat, coastal communities, farms and ranchlands, and migratory species. We support taking action now to prepare Oregon to meet the challenges of a changing climate.

In the same breath, we urge policy makers to keep in mind the unique role of Oregon's lands and waters in providing ecological resilience and adaptation to climate change. Oregon's natural resources play a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change. Restoration of wetlands and estuaries will help protect coastal communities from storms, floods and rising sea levels. Establishing corridors of connected habitat on private lands can help link up larger state preserves and parks, allowing species to adapt to climate change by moving north or higher in altitude. Well-managed agricultural lands can help protect important wildlife habitat, improve soil health, and enhance irrigation efficiency to adjust to rising temperatures and altered weather patterns. Oregon's forests provide clean water and play a key role in carbon sequestration and creating natural carbon stores.

The current version of the Clean Energy Jobs bill includes a commitment to Oregon's lands and waters by directing at least 20% of the Climate Investment Fund to "natural and working lands." COLT strongly supports this addition and appreciates the effort to convene natural resource interests through a legislative work group for Agriculture, Forests, Fisheries, Rural Communities, and Tribes.

Blue Mountains Conservancy  
Blue Mountain Land Trust  
Columbia Land Trust  
Deschutes Land Trust  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust  
Greenbelt Land Trust  
Klamath Lake Land Trust  
Lower Nehalem Community Trust  
McKenzie River Trust  
North Coast Land Conservancy  
Oregon Rangeland Trust  
Pacific Forest Trust  
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy  
The Conservation Fund  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Wetlands Conservancy  
The Trust for Public Land  
Wallowa Land Trust  
Wild Rivers Land Trust

At the same time, COLT would like to see a more detailed commitment to adaptation and the role our natural lands play within the larger program. For example, conservation easements should be listed an allowable use of Climate Investment Funds to create durable, cost-effective investments. Investments in adaptation and resilience pay out many times. Preservation and restoration of natural areas means that those critical ecological services that clean our air and maintain our land will not be destroyed in the event of a climate catastrophe. At the same time, conserved land protects the forests, farms, and fisheries on which Oregon's economy depends. Our natural areas are threatened by climate change, but they are also the solution for how we will adapt and survive.

**COLT can help by bringing together land trust and their private landowners partners to work on climate change holistically.** The problems of climate adaptation and mitigation are daunting, and we will need a coalition of many different parties across the state to address these issues. We urge the State to continue to address climate change and continue to build support by involving natural resources stakeholders that represent both urban and rural communities in Oregon.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



Kelley Beamer  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

