



Together. For Oregon's Land.

February 6, 2019

Testimony in support of HB 2315: Relating to the division of land for noncommercial open space purposes

Oregon House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2315, which proposes a technical improvement to Oregon's Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zoning statute, ORS 215.263(10), to facilitate the protection of conservation lands and open spaces by allowing EFU land to be donated for conservation purposes.

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is the central voice for 21 land trusts in Oregon. Our mission is to serve and strengthen the land trust community of Oregon. The work of COLT and our members ensures that Oregon's natural systems, watersheds and recreational lands are protected for future generations. The members of COLT are rooted in local communities and accomplish their conservation missions by partnering with landowners, volunteers, foundations and public agencies. Together, COLT's members have conserved over 450,000 acres in Oregon.

We join The Nature Conservancy, one of our members, in thanking Representative Daniel Bonham for introducing HB 2315 and the committee for scheduling this hearing today. On behalf of COLT's members, I wish to make the following points:

- The technical amendment proposed in HB 2315 is surgical and straightforward. It will support land trusts, public entities and other not-for-profit organizations in donating property to other public and private entities that share a conservation ethic and are providers of open space and public parks.
- HB 2315 makes a technical improvement to Oregon's zoning statute and appropriately aligns the original intent of the legislature with the unintended consequence of placing a limitation on property transfers for conservation purposes.

Blue Mountains Conservancy
Blue Mountain Land Trust
Columbia Land Trust
Center for Natural Lands Management
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

- HB 2315 removes a barrier for charitable land conservation in Oregon. This bill is not designed to solely promote The Nature Conservancy's land transfer interests, but supports a broader conservation constituency by allowing conservation organizations to accept donations of land when a subdivision of property occurs that creates a parcel less than the minimum zoning requirement size for purposes enshrined in the statute.
- HB 2315 is not designed to favor an entity interested in donating or receiving donated property. It neither changes nor excludes any eligible entity already allowed to transact under the statute. Therefore, the same standards of land management and conservation practices mandated under this statute to date would continue.

Land trusts have a long history of working collaboratively with landowners to advance stewardship opportunities in Oregon and protect our natural heritage. This work includes completing land acquisition transactions in partnership with public and private entities. This technical improvement to ORS 215.263(10) will improve enabling conditions for land transactions and support lasting conservation outcomes.

We urge the committee to give HB 2315 a favorable conservation and pass this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on HB 2315.

Sincerely,



Kelley Beamer, executive director, COLT