



Together. For Oregon's Land.

March 13, 2019

*Testimony in support of HB 2829 – Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund*

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the Committee,

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.

**We write to express our strong support for HB 2829 and urge the legislature to appropriate \$17 million of general funds to establish the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.**

Oregon's natural resources support the continued vitality of our state's \$16.4 billion outdoor recreation industry and the 172,000 jobs that it provides. The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund would:

- Implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Nearshore Strategy;
- Reduce Oregon's reliance on fishing and hunting fees to protect and enhance Oregon's fish, wildlife, and their habitats;
- Provide funding for activities that protect, maintain, or enhance the state's native fish and wildlife; and
- Allow for increased education and outreach to diverse and underserved communities.

Additionally, funding from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund may be used to satisfy state match requirements for potential federal funding. For example, bipartisan support is building in Congress for Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA). Passage of RAWA would apportion \$52 million biennially for state-led wildlife conservation efforts in Oregon, subject to the availability of a 25% match contribution from non-federal sources. Oregon risks missing a golden opportunity to access new federal funds without this match funding in place.

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

The members of COLT are rooted in local communities and accomplish their conservation missions by partnering with landowners, volunteers, foundations and public agencies. Passing HB 2829 would enable COLT's members to pursue joint projects with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to accomplish our statewide Conservation Strategy. These collaborative projects funded by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund help ensure our children and grandchildren continue to have access to the diverse natural resources, abundant fish and wildlife, and the outdoor recreation opportunities that we enjoy today.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 2829. We urge your strong support for the bill and welcome any questions that the Committee may have about the impact of creating the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelley Beamer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelley Beamer  
Executive Director, COLT