



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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March 18, 2021

Testimony in support of HB 3160

To the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management:

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is the central voice for 29 land conservation organizations in Oregon that work to protect land and connect people to nature. Our mission is to serve and strengthen the land trust community of Oregon. The work of COLT and our member organizations ensure that Oregon's natural systems, watersheds and recreational lands are protected for future generations.

**COLT supports HB 3160 and the creation of an Oregon Wildfire Preparedness and Community Protection Fund.** It is no longer a question that wildfire is a growing problem in Oregon. It is here. This past fall, many of our members scrambled when wildfires swept through Oregon's temperate forests. Our members stepped up to support displaced communities, and they stepped up to deploy land restoration strategies like reforestation, stabilization, watershed restoration and drinking water protection. I watched as they tried to identify and apply to federal programs to support this work. **This was challenging, time-consuming and caused delay when immediate relief was needed.**

The Wildfire Preparedness and Community Protection Fund will provide local organizations with the resources they need to deploy fire recovery activities. As one of the three recipient agencies, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) has existing infrastructure on the ground to support wildfire recovery through a strong network of land owners, land trusts, watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts. OWEB's ability to utilize this network to address watershed recovery is key.

**\$10 is not a heavy load for Oregonians to bear.** Especially when it buys assurance against a triage-response to wildfire recovery and invests in the future our communities.

Sincerely,

Kelley Beamer  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts