



May 18, 2021

The Honorable Janelle Bynum, Chair  
House Committee On Judiciary

RE: Please support SB 289 A

Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Friends of the Columbia Gorge (“Friends”) and its 6,000 members in support of SB 289 A. Friends is 40-year old organization dedicated to the protection, preservation and stewardship of the Columbia Gorge.

Every year, millions of people use and visit the trails, parks and waters of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Yet, every year, some visitors feel less than safe due to bias incidences and crimes. The time has come for all public lands to be safe for all members of the public. Oregon can lead the way with SB 289 A.

SB 289 A would protect the public from bias crimes by prohibiting persons convicted of violations of ORS 166.155 and ORS 166.165 on public lands from using those lands and waters for a period of six months to five years. It would also revoke licenses for recreation uses and prohibit the issuance of licenses for a period of up to five years. It is our hope that the penalties included in SB 289 A would be sufficient to provide a deterrent to potential perpetrators. Friends believes this bill takes important steps in setting standards for penalties and restorative justice activities when a bias crime has occurred on our parks, public lands, and waters. We believe this bill is an important step toward making Oregon’s parks, trails, and recreation sites equally welcoming and accessible to all Oregonians.

Too often the U.S. conservation community has been silent on issues of justice, equality, and access to the outdoors. This cannot continue. Our communities and the natural areas we protect should be refuges, safe spaces for all people. No one should ever feel unwelcome or unsafe on public lands in the Columbia Gorge.

We wholehearted support SB 289 A and hope to see this legislation pass out of committee with a do-pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Gorman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" and last name "Gorman" clearly distinguishable.

**Kevin Gorman**  
Executive Director