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February 19, 2023

Representative Jason Kropf
House Judiciary Committee Members
Senator Lynn Findley/Representative Mark Owens

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB2688

My name is Shaun Robertson and I am submitting testimony in support of HB2688, a bill to modify provisions establishing civil action for property owner regarding the use of unmanned aircraft system of private land without permission.

By way of background, I am the fourth generation of Robertsons from Grant County, my family having settled here in the late 1800's. I graduated from Grant Union High School, where my mother also graduated, as did my own children nearly 50 years after their grandmother. I'm over 35 years into a professional career as a biologist, having graduated with a degree in Fisheries from Oregon State and subsequently working throughout the western U.S. but mostly in Grant County. Presently, I own a natural resource consulting company and volunteer for a number of organizations, including serving as the Grant County Farm Bureau President for the last five years. My wife of 22 years was raised on a ranch in central British Columbia and, being the smarter of the two of us, is a veterinarian and, together, we own the only veterinary clinic in Grant County. We have two children, one who is enrolled in the natural resource program at TVCC in Ontario and is a pitcher on the baseball team, the other in the honors program at Colorado State University enrolled in equine science and on the rodeo team.

My wife and I have been fortunate in circumstance, but also by consequence of hard labor and sacrifice that we have experienced success in our personal and professional lives, part of which was purchasing land to serve as the foundation for a small ranch operation. We presently own 4,000 acres with deeded holdings in the main John Day and Fox valleys where we raise cattle and native grass seed, manage the conservation of ecological services, and conduct commercial recreation. Like other ranches in the area, ours is located in rugged and remote terrain, where access can be extremely difficult (some parts of ours require three hours or more simply to access. We frequently use drones to increase efficiency in a number of management purposes, including checking and moving cattle, rapidly assessing fence conditions (we have over 32 miles of boundary and interior fence), monitoring and assessing resources such as vegetation and wildlife, and trespass and fire patrol.

Similar to many, many other private landowners throughout Oregon, we not only manage some of the most sensitive and important habitats and resources in the State but we both recognize-and attach substantial value to-the social, cultural, economic, and other resources

on our private lands. We also acknowledge the value the public often also places on these privately owned and managed resources along with certain obligations that accompany our ownership. Like other landowners, we have made significant investments (solely and with the general public's assistance) in resource conservation. I can say with absolute certainty from personal experience and study that much of the productivity and security for many of Oregon's most valued resources is correlated closely with the stewardship, including security, that private landowners provide.

All that said, however, I am far from an expert on drone use, technology or the laws affecting the use of drones and there are numerous people in this State and elsewhere who are very much more intelligent about this subject than I am. Quite simply, I developed the subject bill from my perspectives of landowner, hunter, and scientist, and in response to the recognition of the significant ongoing conflicts and potential problems that can be created from the misuse of drones and drone-collected information. I recognize that the changes I've recommended are only a small part of the ongoing conversations related to the use of drones along with all the issues, such as privacy concerns, that arise and I fully expect those conversations to naturally result in additional statutory and rule developments.

In the hands of a skilled operator and for legitimate purposes, drones are an amazing tool but they are equally effective when put to use for improper means. Recognizing the need to enhance the ability of landowners to protect themselves from inappropriate uses and creating a disincentive to illegitimate uses seems good progress with this issue.

Sincerely,

Shaun W Robertson, Owner
Picnic Creek Ranch