



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 27, 2023

RE: Testimony in support of SB 795

Chair Golden and members of the committee,

As a resident rooted in Linn County, as is most of my district, I support SB 795.

In her inaugural address, Governor Kotek pledged to strengthen connections with Oregonians from every part of the state.

I quote the Governor for a very important reason. This is a new year with a new administration and new leadership in both the House and the Senate. We have the unique opportunity to do better for our rural and timber counties.

“Greatest permanent value.” This was the crux of the matter in the lawsuit Linn County brought against the state that we’re all familiar with. This definition, this contract, worked for a while, for decades. In the late 90’s, the state changed this definition. The state decided then that it knew better than the counties did – to the extreme detriment of the counties.

I was at a Veteran’s breakfast a few weeks back and spoke to a Veteran’s son living in Klamath. As one does when they find out they are sitting next to a legislator or someone in the government, he started asking questions – and his concerns came down to this: “Does Salem even care anymore? They don’t even listen to us.”

Back to the bill, SB795 allows the unheard part of Oregon to say, “yes, Salem is listening.” From some writings during the trial: This significantly affects those communities whose economies and quality of life have been decimated by the loss of employment in the natural resources sector. These rural communities depend on the stream of timber revenues and the services they provide, and this is their opportunity to realize the value of the lands they entrusted to the state’s promises.

The state is failing in its obligations to the detriment of rural public services and people. If you were to drive through many of these rural counties and towns, you would see it. Managing forests for timber does not mean abandoning habitat or water quality protections or prohibiting public access – strong federal and state laws protect that.

SB 795 allows this body to right a multitude of wrongs. I ask that this committee support and move SB795. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted into the House record,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Shelly Boshart Davis'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shelly Boshart Davis  
Oregon State Representative  
District 15