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Chair Lieber, Chair Sanchez, and other Committee members:

Good evening everyone, and many thanks to the members of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs for hosting this important discussion on their land. Committee members, you have a tough job, and I am grateful for the considerable time, talent, and energy you put into your work.

My name is Lace Thornberg. I serve as the Communications Director for Central Oregon LandWatch and I am a Deschutes County resident. Thank you for this opportunity to share my budget priorities with you! This session, as you contemplate all of your options, I would like to urge you to prioritize funding for projects that will help Oregon be resilient as we face a changing climate. I would also like you to look through a lens of *coexistence* and fund projects which will allow us to live in a way that is more compatible with our natural world: the ocean, rivers, trees, plants, and wildlife.

Four efforts that fit within this are:

- **Wildlife crossings** - Like too many Oregonians, I've survived a collision with a deer. Today, I am grateful for the wildlife crossings and fencing that have reduced collisions on Highway 97 south of Bend by 90%. Please create a dedicated funding source for the construction of wildlife crossings for our safety and the value of reconnecting habitat. This investment would pay off in savings for Oregonians.
- **Improving coexistence with beavers** - By participating in several long-term river restoration projects, I've observed the invaluable contributions that beavers make in the high desert. These prolific dam builders improve water retention, reduce pollution, and create bands of green that stop the spread of wildfires, and they work for free! Please prioritize HB 3143, which provides funding for non-lethal strategies that help landowners coexist with beavers.
- **Home hardening** - Many Central Oregonians live in high fire risk areas. I support HB 3172, which would fund home hardening retrofits for low income folks living in the wildland urban interface
- **Housing infrastructure** - In 2020, I put in 20 different offers on houses in Bend, before finally being able to purchase my 600-square-foot home. I support SB 1103, which recognizes that a lack of infrastructure funding is a significant barrier the Oregon's communities face when seeking to build more affordable housing. This bill recognizes that Oregon's cities need site specific investments *and* system level infrastructure investments in water, sewer, and transportation. I particularly appreciate the focus on Climate Friendly Areas in this bill.

In your role on the Ways & Means Committee, you have an opportunity to create a more just, verdant, and abundant Oregon. I hope you'll fund efforts in service of that goal. Thank you for your consideration!



We defend and plan for Central Oregon's livable future