

My name is Michelle, and I live in Bend, Oregon. I am submitting this written testimony to express my support for SB 1590. If there is one thing that is shared across party lines, it is a love for our public lands. They offer a place for recreation, enjoyment, mental and physical wellness, spiritualism, learning, adventure, artistic inspiration, and so much more that can be shared equally by all regardless of political affiliation, race, gender, age, or socioeconomic status. The preservation efforts and care that go into our public lands also help keep incredibly complicated and delicate ecosystems — plants, animals, bodies of water, air — healthy. Our public lands are at their highest and best use as they stand. Any change to the status quo would come at a substantial cost that would extend beyond any quantitative or financial analysis and would be wildly unpopular.

Financial losses would accrue to the many businesses in our state that rely on recreation and tourism associated with our forests.

Additionally, many people move to (and remain in) Oregon exclusively for the beauty of the undisturbed natural forests and recreation in our public lands. Privatization and any related changes to public lands would likely negatively impact residential real estate. Some would sell their homes because the thing that drew them here would no longer exist. Home supply would increase and prices would decrease. Additionally, interest in moving to Oregon would decline, thereby causing further decreases in demand for housing and pricing. Real estate developers, local governments, and others would be deeply and negatively impacted. Any expected gains by those who would like to privatize public lands would likely never be realized.

Non-financial losses would accrue in the form of ill will toward both state and federal government; declines in the well being of Oregonians, especially children; and degradation of ecosystems that we rely upon not only for recreation and enjoyment but for clear air, water, and food. Once the losses accrued, restoration would be difficult, costly, and perhaps impossible.

Finally, benefits, if any, associated with privatization or selling of public lands would accrue to a small number of individuals; however, the costs would be shared by a very large number of people, including residents of Oregon, out-of-state and international tourists, businesses, and state and local governments. It must be emphasized here that any perceived benefits associated with privatization and selling of public lands would likely never be realized anyway.

It is for the reasons listed above that I support SB 1590. Thank you for your consideration.