



WaterWatch of Oregon

Protecting Natural Flows In Oregon Rivers

SB 1590
Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon
by Kimberley Priestley

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
February 3, 2026

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and Oregon's rivers and aquifers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's waters. We also work for balanced water laws and policies.

WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws on these resources.

WaterWatch urges support of SB 1590

WaterWatch strongly supports SB 1590 which would prohibit Oregon public bodies from expending time and/or resources to help sell off and/or transfer federal public lands to private interests.

Oregon is fortunate to have a sizable federal public land base—including mountains, forests, deserts, grasslands, wetlands, coastal areas and other natural areas. Some of Oregon's most iconic rivers arise from and run through Oregon's beloved federal lands.

These lands and waters are home to a myriad of fish and wildlife species that are important to Oregon's people, cultures and economies. They provide critical habitats for threatened species, native plants, and wildlife migration corridors. Both residents and visitors alike flock to our public lands to fish, hike, camp, hunt and paddle; activities that can be closed off if public lands are sold to private interests.

Protecting Oregon's federal land base—and the rivers that run through them---from privatization is vital to ensuring guaranteed public access for recreation, preservation of important wildlife habitats and ecosystems, maintenance of outdoor economies, and protection of cultural sites and clean water sources.

We respectfully urge the Committee to please pass SB 1590 to help protect the beloved federal public lands that make Oregon the special place it is.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

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