

February 6, 2026

Greetings,

I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 1545 (2026).

Every year, it seems that access to some public lands becomes more difficult, both because of increasing entrance/user fees for parks and because of (understandable) limits on the numbers of people who can make use of very popular areas.

But some public lands remain open to everybody, largely free of charge, in the great tradition of the American west. Anybody may hike, ski or camp on BLM and forest land and, with proper licensing, may hunt and fish in many areas. Particularly at a time when there is an increasing drive to privatize some public lands, ensuring that the public retains this access is critically important.

That is what SB 1545 does. It addresses one area where there has been confusion in some jurisdictions: How does the right of public access work when parcels of public land touch parcels of private land at “corners”? SB 1545 clarifies what should already be apparent: that all people have the right to access what is collectively *ours* – our *public* lands – by corner-crossing, so long as we simply walk across a corner from one *public* parcel of land to another piece of *public* land, and we do not harm private land by doing so.

The bill also respects and protects the rights of private landowners, ensuring that a person who corner-crosses from one public parcel to another cannot bring a negligence – or even gross negligence – claim against private landowners if the person is harmed in the act of corner-crossing. The bill also ensures that corner-crossing will not create easements across private land.

In short, SB 1545 provides clarity about the rights of private landowners and members of the public – protecting the interests of both groups -- in areas where access to public land may require corner-crossing from one parcel of public land to another.

I strongly support the bill.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Respectfully,

Erika Hadlock