



February 23, 2026

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Central Oregon LandWatch Testimony on SB 1590 - Support

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1590. Central Oregon LandWatch (“LandWatch”) is a non-profit, public interest organization with over 1100 members. Our offices are in Bend, Oregon. LandWatch’s mission is to defend and plan for Central Oregon’s livable future, and we have advocated for conservation in Central Oregon for 40 years.

LandWatch strongly supports SB 1590 with the -4 amendment, as well as the broader effort to prevent privatization of Oregon’s public lands and natural resources.

National public lands belong to all Americans, including all Oregonians, and are managed by agencies such as the United States Forest Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service for multiple, vital purposes. These include wildlife protection, clean water, restoration, wildfire response, natural resource extraction, hunting, gathering, and recreation. Our national public lands also provide critical nature-based services by countering the twin climate and biodiversity crises, by sequestering carbon, and by providing climate refuge for a broad array of fish and wildlife.

Despite the tremendous benefits of these special landscapes, the current federal government has increasingly proposed selling, transferring, or otherwise privatizing national public lands in contravention of nearly 150 years of tradition and in direct opposition to Americans’ interests. Efforts to privatize national public lands create authority and jurisdictional complications that hinder, rather than expedite, natural resource and land management processes, while also causing substantial uncertainty for the people, businesses, and Tribes that depend on national public lands for recreational, economic, cultural, and sustenance values.

Federally managed lands are critical to Oregon’s quality of life, scenic beauty, and ecosystem health, and passage of this bill will help ensure that these lands remain in public hands for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

We respectfully urge this committee to pass SB 1590. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

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