



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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February 27th, 2026

To: House Committee on Rules

From: The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

RE: Amendments to S.B. 1517A

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Pham, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Oregon's recreational liability waiver protections.

COLT is a membership organization representing 32 land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and conservation organizations working across Oregon to protect our habitat and natural spaces – for all people, forever. Collectively, our members have protected more than 782,000 acres of land across our state.

Oregon's land trusts are deeply embedded in the communities they serve. Our members offer volunteer stewardship opportunities, professional development, and outdoor education and recreation programs for youth and families. Reforming Oregon's recreational liability waiver standards ensures land trusts and other conservation nonprofits can continue to provide these programs for their communities.

This session we have shared our support for the policy language in S.B. 1593A as a workable solution that would meet our needs. **S.B. 1517A as currently written will not provide our organizations with greater security. There is no protection for stewardship activities, and we would support moving S.B. 1517A forward with the -A11 or -A15 amendments.** The -A11 amendment contains the language our coalition



22 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Mountain Land Trust • Center for Natural Lands Management • Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Forest Park Conservancy • Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust • Lower Nehalem Community Trust • McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy • Oregon Agricultural Trust • Oregon Desert Land Trust

Pacific Forest Trust • Southern Oregon Land Conservancy • The Conservation Fund • The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
Trust for Public Land • The Wetlands Conservancy • Wallowa Land Trust • Western Rivers Conservancy • Wild Rivers Land Trust

10 ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Bird Alliance of Oregon • Black Oregon Land Trust • Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy •
Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District • East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District • Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District • View the Future • Willamette River Preservation Trust •
Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District

members have been asking for all along, and we would also support the broadly applicable language in -A15 if that is the legislature's route towards a compromise.

Many land trusts offer youth and family programming, putting great value on families recreating in the outdoors and participating in stewardship activities together. The enforceability of recreational liability waivers - including parent or guardian consent for minors - is essential for these programs to continue.

- Greenbelt Land Trust runs the [Mighty Acorns Club](#), which welcomed 195 new youth of all ages from the Corvallis area in 2025,
- Deschutes Land Trust has [multiple opportunities](#) for kids and youth to get outside including [Nature Kids](#), which operates guided family/kid nature walks, and
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy runs [nature journaling field trips](#) for K-12 and stewardship volunteer opportunities.

These examples represent just a small snapshot of the outdoor education, recreation, and stewardship opportunities land trusts provide across Oregon. The continued viability of these programs, and our ability to serve our communities, depends on the sensible reform of Oregon's liability waiver system. Without this reform, rising insurance costs and legal uncertainty may force land trusts to scale back or eliminate certain recreation and volunteer stewardship opportunities altogether.

Thank you for your attention and dedication to this issue. We urge the Committee to work to strengthen S.B. 1517A with the -A11 or -A15 amendments.

Sincerely,



Joe Buttafuoco
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

