



Together. For Oregon's Land.

January 31, 2019

Testimony in support of SB 5527- Funding the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Subcommittee Members:

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is the central voice for 21 land trusts in Oregon. Our mission is to serve and strengthen the land trust community of Oregon. The work of COLT and our members ensures that Oregon's natural systems, watersheds and recreational lands are protected for future generations.

The members of COLT are rooted in local communities and accomplish their conservation missions by partnering with landowners, volunteers, foundations and public agencies. Oregon land trusts have a strong partnership with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), based on a shared mission of protecting special places for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations. Land trusts help expand Oregon's park system by protecting and conveying key conservation properties like Brian Booth State Park. Our members also work to expand recreation connectivity. For example, Deschutes Land Trust helped OPRD extend a loop trail around Smith Rock by protecting adjacent private land. Together, COLT's members own over 85,000 acres that are open to the public, complementing the 109,000 acres in Oregon's State Park system.

We are writing today in strong support of the Governor's Recommended Budget for OPRD and would like to highlight a few key elements:

Property Acquisition:

The proposed budget includes funding for the acquisition of new park properties to keep pace with changes in Oregon demographics, recreational habits and conservation priorities. This investment is important way to honor the upcoming State Park Centennial in 2022 and we commend OPRD's call that " Policymakers, politicians, and Oregonians take bold actions that protect priceless places in Oregon."

Office of Outdoor Recreation:

COLT strongly supports the funding allocated to support the new Office of Outdoor Recreation that will provide coordination and services to Oregon's recreation providers and economy. COLT is a member of Oregon Outdoors and recognizes the importance of investing in our state's recreational resources.

- Blue Mountains Conservancy
- Blue Mountain Land Trust
- Columbia Land Trust
- Center for Natural Lands Management
- Deschutes Land Trust
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
- Greenbelt Land Trust
- Klamath Lake Land Trust
- Lower Nehalem Community Trust
- McKenzie River Trust
- North Coast Land Conservancy
- Oregon Rangeland Trust
- Pacific Forest Trust
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wetlands Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land
- Wallowa Land Trust
- Wild Rivers Land Trust

Outreach and Inclusion for Underserved Communities:

COLT strongly supports policy package 105 which would enhance the Department's ability to reach Oregonians currently not accessing the state park system. We believe that Oregon's outdoors can and should be accessible and enjoyable to all Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 5527. We urge your strong support for the full proposal before you today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelley Beamer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelley Beamer
Executive Director, COLT