

May 7, 2021

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

The below named Associations would like to offer testimony in opposition to HB 2486.

The bill as drafted makes no distinction between public and private land and in fact Section 1(1) states that areas closed to the public must be open to media. Section 1(4) goes on to state the news media may not be denied access if a public body escort is not available.

Our members are concerned how this bill would affect their ability to control access to their private property. During emergencies, as seen during the fires last year, private land is equally affected as public land. Public entities may set up a command post on the private land if that is the best location to deal with the emergency. With this bill, the public entity would not be allowed to control access on the private land, and in fact would be required to grant access even if no one was available to escort the media. We feel this would cause private landowners to hesitate offering access for command posts in emergency situations, thus putting off limits what may be the best spot for dealing with emergency situations.

We recognize the proposed -1 amendment does narrow the application of the bill from emergencies to wildfires and natural disasters. We feel it is important to point out that those are the events our members are most concerned with. If the amendment were to be modified so that private property owners could deny access to members of the media, at their discretion, we would have no objection to the bill.

Thank you for considering our objections to the HB 2486 and the -1 amendment.

Oregon Small Woodlands Association, Roger Beyer, Lobbyist

Oregon Forest and Industries Council, Mike Eliason, General Counsel and Director of Public Affairs

Oregon Cattleman's Association, Tammy Dennee, Executive Director

Oregon Sheep Growers Association, Richard Kosesan, Lobbyist

Oregon Farm Bureau, Mary Anne Cooper, Vice President of Public Policy

Associated Oregon Loggers, Amanda Astor, Forest Policy Manager