

February 11, 2025

RE: Polk County Urges Support for House Bill 3175, Public Land Corner Preservation Program Modernization

Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, Members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Polk County has 745 square miles, 11% of which is under Federal and State ownership, and every half mile of land has a public land corner, or “controlling land corner” marked by a monument that sets the boundaries of all properties in the state. That gives Polk County an estimated 3700 existing survey monuments to track, maintain, repair, and replace.


From the first stone monument set by the federal government in 1851 to today’s metal markers, Public Land Corners have been aged, damaged, moved, and disturbed. And since Polk County was founded on December 22, 1845, our county surveyors have been excavating, repairing, replacing, and perpetuating monuments, many in their original position to preserve the system that holds up all of Polk County’s property boundaries. When corners are destroyed or improperly placed, every landowner’s property lines become less certain.

The cost of managing public land corners has increased significantly as the pace of development, labor costs, and inflation have not kept up with revenue sources. In 1985, the Oregon State Legislature created the Public Land Corner Preservation (PLCP) Fund in ORS 203.148. Supported by document recording fees that are capped at \$10 per document recorded, PLCP Funds are statutorily restricted for use only for costs incurred and authorized by the County Surveyor for establishment, reestablishment, and maintenance of controlling property corners in the county.

House Bill 3175 removes the cap on document recording fees for the PLCP Fund, allowing counties to establish fees based on local needs. An adequately funded corner program benefits all Oregonians and furthers the legislature’s policy goals related to housing and emergency management.

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Sincerely,

  
Darren Blackwell, PLS  
Polk County Surveyor