



February 17, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Letter in Support of SB 179

Dear Chair Senator Prozanski and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

On Behalf of View the Future Inc., I am writing to express my strong support for SB 179, which aims to restore and reinforce the immunity provisions of the Oregon Public Use of Lands Act.

As a representative of View the Future, a land trust responsible for the easement on the Amanda Trail, in Yachats, Oregon, I would like to emphasize the significance of the Act for our community. The Amanda Trail is a cherished asset, attracting over 1,000 visitors each year to the area. These visitors include local residents, visitors and groups who use the trail for recreation as well as various educational and community activities. The trail offers access to beautiful viewpoints, habitat and bird-watching locations, and connectivity to the Oregon Coast Trail and area 804, and Yax'aik Trails contributing greatly to the recreational quality of life in our region. The trail is the site for a local remembrance ceremony honoring the past of the indigenous tribes who once inhabited the area, and is a vehicle for educating the community and its visitors on the past genocidal practices that the tribes endured and the importance of protecting this historical land.

The 2023 Oregon Court of Appeals decision that undermined the immunity guaranteed by the Act poses a serious threat to our ability to maintain and provide access to such valuable recreational spaces. As it stands, land trusts like ours are now at a greater risk of facing lawsuits from recreational users who might claim injuries while using the trails. This not only exposes us to potentially costly litigation but also could also result in increased litigation, increased liability insurance premiums, straining our resources and jeopardizing our mission beyond sustainability.

SB 179 is critical in addressing these concerns and ensuring that land trusts can continue to offer their lands for public enjoyment without the looming threat of legal repercussions. However, while I support the bill as written, I must express my disappointment that it does



not offer stronger protections. More robust measures could further safeguard landowners and trusts, promoting broader access to recreational spaces for all Oregonians. In conclusion, I urge you to support SB 179 to restore the protections that enable landowners to share their lands without fear. This legislation is vital for preserving Oregon's rich tradition of public access to natural and recreational areas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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