

March 19, 2025

RE: Lincoln County urges support for House Bill 3175, Public Land Corner Preservation Program Modernization

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Thatcher, Members of the Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Lincoln County has 992 square miles, and every half mile of land has a public land corner, or “controlling property corner” marked by a monument that sets the boundaries of all properties in the state. That gives Lincoln County over 3,000 monuments to track, maintain, repair, replace, and apply geodetic control.

From the first stone monument set by the federal government in 1851 to today’s metal markers, controlling property corners have been aged, damaged, moved, and disturbed. And since Lincoln County was founded in 1893 (and previously Benton County starting in 1847), 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 Lincoln 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.

Lincoln County is home to one of the most famous cases of litigation on land boundaries relating to controlling property corners. This case has been written about numerous times in national surveying magazines and is routinely referenced at land surveying conferences across the country. This case highlights some of the risks of neglecting the preservation of controlling property corners. Modernizing the 1985 funding would allow Lincoln County to resume the excellent work that we once did from the mid 80s to early 2000s.

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.

Lincoln County urges support for House Bill 3175, Public Land Corner Preservation Program Modernization.

Sincerely,



Claire Hall, Lincoln County Commissioner, Chair



Eli Adam, Lincoln County Surveyor

