



March 26, 2025

Senate Committee on Rules

Re: SJR 28 - SUPPORT

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Committee Members:

Friends of the Columbia Gorge (“Friends”) is a non-profit organization with approximately 5,000 members. Friends is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (“Gorge”).

Friends requests that the committee support SJR 28, which would refer to the voters an amendment to the Oregon Constitution stating a right to a clean, safe, and healthy environment. Oregon is home to incredible natural landscapes, including the Columbia River Gorge, one of our nation’s most treasured landscapes which is home to an incredible biodiversity of plants and animals. It’s time for our state to take proactive steps to protect these special places that make up Oregon’s natural beauty.

Oregon has long been a leader in environmental action, and passing an amendment to a healthy environment would be a key step to continuing that leadership. Under our current system, we wait to address environmental threats until they occur and public pressure forces action. Given the significant threats presented by climate change, Oregon needs to start taking proactive measures to protect the environment. Engaging in proactive prevention of environmental degradation will be much less costly than responding to emerging disasters.

Now is a critical time to act. Oregon has long relied on federal environmental laws to fill gaps in our state regulatory system. Longstanding federal environmental protections such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are all under threat due to the current administration. Thus far, there have already been 31 proposed rollbacks to regulations by the EPA. Oregon needs to be prepared to step up to protect the environment and have backstops in place as the federal regulatory landscape is being weakened.

Please support SJR 28 and stand up for Oregonian’s right to a healthy environment.

Sincerely,
Madison Kenney
Conservation Organizer