

**Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee,**

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Joint Resolution 28 (SJR 28), which seeks to amend Oregon's constitution to assert greater control over our state's lands. A clean and healthy environment is not merely a matter of ecological concern; it is intrinsically linked to the economic well-being of our state and its citizens. By adopting SJR 28, Oregon can safeguard its natural resources, ensuring economic prosperity while preserving our cherished reputation as the "Pacific Wonderland."

### **Economic Benefits of a Clean Environment**

1. **Reduced Healthcare Costs and Increased Productivity**

Environmental pollution has direct and indirect health implications, leading to increased medical expenses and decreased workplace productivity. For instance, wildfire smoke incurs significant adaptation costs for Oregon households, averaging \$450 per day due to expenditures on air purifiers, canceled trips, and childcare during smoke events ([news.uoregon.edu](https://news.uoregon.edu)). By maintaining a clean environment, we can mitigate such health hazards, reducing medical expenses, minimizing work absences due to illness, and increasing economic output across sectors.

2. **Enhanced Agricultural Productivity and Property Value**

A healthy environment is foundational to productive agriculture. Practices such as sustainable forest management not only preserve our forests but also contribute to the overall health of our agricultural lands ([oregon.gov](https://oregon.gov)). Sustainable harvesting practices in rural natural resource industries—such as timber, fisheries, and farming—stand to benefit significantly from SJR 28, ensuring long-term economic viability for these sectors. Additionally, cleaner environments lead to higher property values, attracting businesses and families who value a thriving, pollution-free community.

3. **Economic Growth through Environmental Restoration and Tourism**

Investments in environmental restoration stimulate economic activity. From 2001 to 2010, watershed restoration projects in Oregon generated significant employment and economic benefits ([journals.openedition.org](https://journals.openedition.org)). Oregon's tourism industry, valued at over \$12 billion annually, thrives on the state's pristine landscapes, including its forests, rivers, and coastline. A degraded environment would deter visitors, leading to economic downturns in communities reliant on tourism revenue.

### **Financial Implications of Environmental Degradation**

Conversely, neglecting our environment can lead to substantial economic losses. Climate change poses escalating risks to Oregon's economy, with negative impacts imposing

increasingly disruptive costs ([oregon.gov](http://oregon.gov)). Climate-related disruptions in food production and delivery systems are projected to increase food prices, directly affecting Oregon households ([dfw.state.or.us](http://dfw.state.or.us)). These examples underscore the tangible financial consequences of environmental neglect, demonstrating the necessity of proactive environmental governance.

### **SJR 28 and Oregon's Independence**

Failing to amend our constitution to assert control over Oregon's lands jeopardizes our state's independence and ability to manage our natural resources effectively. Currently, federal oversight can restrict Oregon's ability to make decisions that align with our state's economic and environmental priorities. By passing SJR 28, Oregon will gain greater autonomy in directing its resource use, allowing for responsible management practices that balance economic development with environmental preservation.

A clean and well-managed environment contributes to countless aspects of Oregon's economic and social prosperity: increased agricultural yields, food security, water security, reduced healthcare costs, improved public health, mental peace, civic pride, and happier more engaged citizens. Oregon's reputation as a leader in sustainability will attract businesses and residents who seek a high quality of life, reinforcing a cycle of prosperity.

In conclusion, the adoption of SJR 28 is not solely an environmental imperative but an economic necessity. By enshrining the protection and management of our lands within our constitution, we invest in the health, prosperity, and future of Oregon and its citizens. I urge you to support this resolution for the enduring benefit of our state.

**Thank you for considering this critical matter.**

Sincerely,  
Darin G. Henry