

Submitter: Edem Gomez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3846

Opposition to House Bill 3846

Dear Legislators,

As an Oregonian, raised on the Oregon Coast and now residing in Southern Oregon, I write today in firm opposition to House Bill 3846. As an avid hunter, fisherman, hiker, and regular user of our federally managed public lands, I strongly urge you to reject this bill and preserve these lands under federal stewardship for the benefit of all Americans.

HB 3846 proposes the leasing of the Ochoco National Forest, comprising over 845,000 acres, to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), effectively transferring management from federal to state control. This is a troubling move that could set a dangerous precedent for the privatization or fragmentation of public lands throughout Oregon and the West.

ODF currently faces significant budgetary and capacity challenges. Adding such a large area to its management portfolio not only risks overextending the agency, but also raises concerns that these lands will be increasingly prioritized for extractive uses, at the expense of wildlife habitat, and public access.

Unlike federal agencies, state management would not be subject to critical safeguards under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), reducing transparency, limiting public input, and weakening environmental review. Programs such as the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) have already proven effective at advancing collaborative forest management and fire mitigation efforts without transferring ownership or control.

Furthermore, this bill represents part of a broader, coordinated threat to public lands across the West, as proposals to sell or transfer these lands continue to emerge, now even tied to potential federal budget reconciliation discussions. These lands are not just resources, they are heritage. They are a cornerstone of Oregon's outdoor traditions, economy, and identity.

I urge you to oppose HB 3846 in the strongest possible terms. Federal public lands belong to all Americans. Transferring or leasing them to state control is a disservice

to current and future generations of Oregonians and all Americans who rely on these lands for recreation, subsistence, conservation, and cultural value.

Please defend our shared public lands and reject House Bill 3846.