

Submitter: Steven Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3846

Hello,

First I would like to thank the Committee for hearing this testimony and the consideration given.

I moved to Central Oregon from Idaho just over a decade ago, and from that point forward I have found myself consistently recreating in the Ochoco National Forest. My children have grown up learning what it means to be stewards of our public resources on those lands. They have learned how hunting and fishing are valuable conservation tools that we can all participate in to help manage our public resources. They have seen and felt the connection to our public lands through volunteer work and simple time being in nature. They have learned valuable skills such as plant and tree identification, how to forage for edible plants, land navigation, and more. This has fostered a value in our family that we are active participants in the conservation of our public lands as well as the wildlife and the habitats they need to thrive.

In short, I oppose HB 3846 because it could have massive ramifications not just for my family but everyone who enjoys the access and activities afforded by our wonderful Federally managed public lands. This would be a short step away from full privatization of one of the most magnificent systems this world has ever seen. Our public lands are a rare gift and privilege that need to be safely guarded against any steps towards privatization.

This is more than an attempt to defend my favorite hunting spots. This is more than an attempt to save my families weekend outings. This more than saving my foraging, camping and hiking spots. This is a plea to safeguard the value that needs to be held on to for future generations. These public lands are more than just a temporary fix to a budgetary shortfall. They are not a savings account for politicians who fail to balance a budget to draw upon when they deem fit.

These lands are not mine, nor anyone else's. But they are mine and yours to protect for future generations.

I hope we can all take this time to attempt to be good ancestors to those who look back at how we managed these places for their benefit. I hope and pray we can all take a moment to realize that none of these lands are truly ours, it is simply our turn to take care of them for our children, their children and their children's children.