

Submitter: Shelby Staffenson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB74

I strongly oppose SB74A. This bill threatens private property rights, creates legal uncertainty, and expands bureaucratic power without adequate oversight or recourse for landowners. Giving Department of State Lands (DSL) broad and unilateral authority to reinterpret the state's interests in submerged lands, potentially overriding decades of settled property ownership, is not right. Allowing DSL to retroactively assert ownership over submerged lands that private parties have long used, maintained, or improved creates immediate and costly uncertainty for farmers, ranchers, recreation businesses, and rural landowners. The bill also empowers DSL to negotiate exchanges of mineral and geothermal rights—assets that often hold considerable value—without requiring clear guidelines or protections for affected property owners. This raises serious concerns about fairness, transparency, and the potential for coercion in such negotiations, especially in rural communities with fewer resources to challenge or appeal state decisions. This bill is government overreach. Please do NOT advance this bill. Vote NO on SB74A or any variation of it.