To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Re: SB 1545 — Written Testimony in Support
Date: February 9, 2026

Chair Senator Floyd Prozanski, Vice-Chair Senator Kim Thatcher, and Members of the Committee—Senator Anthony Broadman, Senator Sara Gelser Blouin, Senator James Manning Jr., and Senator Mike McLane:

My name is Ian Isaacson, and I am a public land user who lives in Bend. I'm submitting written testimony in support of SB 1545.

Corner crossing is not a crime. And SB 1545 is not "making it legal," because the act this bill describes—stepping precisely from public land to public land at a shared corner, without damaging private property—is already lawful.

What SB 1545 *does* is replace a manufactured gray area with clarity, and it does so in a way that meaningfully protects private landowners from liability and reduces conflict.

SB 1545 is, in practical effect, a landowner protection bill.

The clearest evidence of that is the bill text itself:

- It prevents a private landowner from bringing a civil trespass action against someone who corner crosses only if the person is authorized to be on the public land, does not cause physical harm to property, and does not unreasonably interfere with the landowner's use and enjoyment of their property.
- It then goes further and provides landowners a strong shield: a person who corner crosses may not bring a claim for negligence or gross negligence against the private landowner for damages arising out of the act of corner crossing.
- And it states plainly that the bill does not establish a prescriptive easement across private land.

Those are not the provisions of an "access expansion" bill. Those are the provisions of a bill designed to prevent landowners and public land users from being dragged into costly disputes and to reduce the risk that a lawful act is wrongly treated as a crime.

Addressing the most prevalent arguments from opponents of the bill:

1) "Corners are hard to locate; GPS/apps aren't exact."

Yes—GPS, digital mapping layers, and apps have tolerance ranges. But it's equally true that physical markers and legacy records are not infallible either. Old monuments can be disturbed, old pins can be misplaced or missing, fences located incorrectly and older county mapping and tax-lot depictions can be generalized or inconsistent. In other words, uncertainty is not a "technology problem"; it's a property demarcation problem that shows up in multiple forms, and preserving legal ambiguity by maintaining the status quo is not the answer.

And we should be honest about the direction of mapping apps: technology is getting better, not worse, and accuracy tools will continue to improve. The goal should be clarity that encourages good-faith compliance as that accuracy improves—not an intentionally murky framework that guarantees confrontation.

Finally, when there are real discrepancies between what a user sees on a digital parcel layer, often based on recorded county linework, and what appears to be on-the-ground monumentation, those discrepancies should be addressed and corrected on a case-by-case basis for everyone's benefit—landowners, public land managers, and the public. Clarity in the statute doesn't prevent that; it helps by giving everyone the same baseline expectation while the technical demarcation issues are resolved.

Ambiguity is what turns minor uncertainty into conflict. Clarity is what allows landowners, law enforcement, and the public to share the same rulebook.

2) "This will make people think they can access landlocked public lands."

That is simply not what this bill does. The bill is explicit: it addresses stepping from public land to public land at a shared corner. It also expressly states it does not create a prescriptive easement across private land.

If a public parcel is truly landlocked with no lawful access, SB 1545 does not magically create a right-of-way across private property to reach it. Trespass remains trespass; this bill simply prevents lawful corner crossing from being mislabeled as criminal or civil trespass.

3) "The short session is too short—pull the bill."

I respect the desire for robust engagement on any issue. At the same time, the short session is the Legislature's established process, and stakeholders have been actively participating within it (see submitted testimony in OLIS). "Not enough time" is not, by itself, a policy argument—it's a request to preserve uncertainty.

And candidly, the process appears to be more than timely for the broad, diverse coalition supporting SB 1545—including organizations with very different missions and memberships, and a bipartisan group of legislators from different ends of the political spectrum and from every corner of the state who are openly backing this bill. In other words, the record already reflects substantial engagement, serious vetting, and a wide range of perspectives—not a rushed idea moving in the dark.

More importantly, delay does not reduce conflict; it extends it. Right now, opponents are increasingly trying to recast lawful conduct as criminal conduct. SB 1545 addresses that directly by clarifying how Oregon's trespass statutes apply when corner crossing is conducted in accordance with the bill, while also providing meaningful landowner protection by barring negligence and gross-negligence claims arising from the act.

If the Legislature wants to reduce confrontation between private landowners and public land users, the responsible move is to clarify the rules now—not after another season of preventable conflict.

In closing, and to be crystal clear: corner crossing is not a crime. SB 1545 does not "legalize" a new right; it codifies and clarifies a narrow, already-lawful act and, critically, it provides meaningful liability protection for private landowners while reducing conflict and uncertainty for everyone.

For those reasons, I urge the committee to support SB 1545.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Isaacson