

Submitter: Anthony Miller
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1545

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1545, which provides immunity from trespass liability for individuals who “corner cross” at the intersection of public lands. This bill addresses a long-standing access problem in the West where public land is effectively blocked off by private parcels that only touch at corners. While the land itself belongs to the public, it is often functionally inaccessible. SB 1545 provides a narrow, reasonable solution that respects both public access and private property rights.

This bill does not open private land to the public. SB 1545 does not allow people to enter or travel across private property. It only protects individuals from trespass liability when they move from one parcel of public land to another at a shared corner without setting foot on private land. That is an important distinction. The intent is not to diminish private property rights, but to clarify that accessing public land without occupying private land should not be treated as a crime.

It reduces conflict and legal gray areas.

Right now, the lack of clarity creates tension between landowners, hunters, hikers, and other public land users. People are left guessing what is legal, and that uncertainty leads to disputes, law enforcement involvement, and costly legal battles. Clear statutory guidance benefits everyone. Landowners know the limits of public access, and the public understands the rules.

It improves access to land that already belongs to the public. Oregonians fund and manage public lands for recreation, wildlife, and natural resource conservation. In many checkerboard areas, large blocks of public land are effectively landlocked due to corner configurations. SB 1545 helps ensure that public land is truly accessible to the public, without requiring new easements, purchases, or litigation.

It supports outdoor recreation and rural economies. Hunters, anglers, hikers, and other outdoor users contribute significantly to rural communities through travel, lodging, fuel, and equipment purchases. When public lands are practically inaccessible, those economic and recreational benefits are limited. Reasonable access supports responsible recreation and the small businesses that depend on it.

This is a balanced, narrow policy. SB 1545 does not grant broad crossing rights. It does not create a general right to pass through private property. It simply addresses a very specific scenario where public lands meet at a corner and clarifies that moving

between those public parcels should not expose someone to trespass liability if they do not physically occupy private land.

That is a fair and common-sense standard.

Oregon can protect private property rights while also ensuring that land owned by the public remains meaningfully accessible. SB 1545 strikes that balance. I respectfully urge you to support SB 1545.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anthony Miller

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