

Submitter: John Maher
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or SB1580
Topic:
Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1580
Oregon State Legislature

Chair Meek, Vice Chair Drazen and Members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 1580.

Local journalism is a public service essential to Oregon's democracy. For generations, Oregon news organizations have informed communities, held institutions accountable, and connected neighbors to one another. Yet today, the economic foundation that supports this work is being steadily eroded by global technology platforms that extract value from journalism without fair compensation.

SB 1580 addresses a fundamental and harmful imbalance. Covered platforms routinely crawl, index, scrape and monetize Oregon journalism—now increasingly through AI-generated summaries that disconnects audiences from our trusted brands and substitutes for reading the original reporting—while diverting both advertising revenue and audience engagement away from local newsrooms. This dynamic is no longer speculative. As powerful platforms harness AI to evolve into “answer engines,” our content is being unfairly expropriated without our consent, vital referral traffic is suffering and journalism is being reduced to a citation, not a destination, undermining the revenue streams that support reporting jobs.

This bill establishes a clear, market-based framework requiring platforms to enter into agreements before accessing Oregon news content for monetization. It encourages negotiation, provides a fair arbitration backstop, and creates transparency around how journalistic content is used and compensated. Importantly, SB 1580 does not interfere with editorial judgment, platform ranking, or free expression. It simply ensures that those who profit from journalism contribute to its sustainability.

This legislation is not about punishing technology or slowing innovation. It is about fairness, accountability, and preserving the local news ecosystems that democracy depends on. Without sustainable journalism, the quality and desirability of AI models will also suffer. With SB 1580, Oregon has the opportunity to lead by example and help secure a sustainable future for quality journalism and responsible innovation.

I respectfully urge your support for Senate Bill 1580.

Respectfully submitted,
John Maher