

Submitter: Ken Engelman
On Behalf Of: McKenzie River Reflections
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1580

To: Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government

Re: Support for SB 1580

Date: February 10, 2026

Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for Senate Bill 1580.

My name is Ken Engelman, and I have published the weekly McKenzie River Reflections newspaper for 48 years. I am a member of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, the Oregon Public Information Partnership, and Local Independent Online News (LION).

In 2020, when wildfires devastated our region, River Reflections provided in-depth local coverage that our rural community has long depended on. The newspaper continues to serve as a vital voice, highlighting ongoing wildfire recovery and rebuilding efforts.

As a small news outlet, I support SB 1580 because it would provide meaningful support for both my business and my ability to continue covering local schools and fire districts, Lane County Sheriff's responses, cultural events, and the nine unincorporated communities of the McKenzie Valley.

I find it difficult to accept claims from some of the world's largest technology companies that they are entitled to use news content without fair compensation. River Reflections is itself a financial contributor to the Oregon News Service, For Oregon Rural Journalism, and Lookout Eugene–Springfield. If a small business like mine can afford to support Oregon journalism, large corporations should be able to do the same.

We have all heard the troubling reports that an average of 2.5 newspapers close each week in the United States. When local newspapers disappear, accurate reporting is often replaced by misinformation, weakening public trust. This outcome is not inevitable.

I know this because technology, internet access, and social media have helped revitalize McKenzie River Reflections and strengthened our ability to serve the community where I live and work.

Please take this opportunity to support reinvestment in Oregon's newsrooms. SB 1580 is a fair and necessary step toward restoring the conditions in which local journalism—and democracy—can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Engelman

Publisher, McKenzie River Reflections