

## Testimony Regarding HB 2365

### Creation of a Task Force to Study federal Lands Transfers

2/16/2017

Chair Clem and Members of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

I am Gerritt Rosenthal and I live in Tualatin Oregon. I am a 50 year resident of Oregon and frequent user of federally owned lands.

Here are some points I consider to be obvious:

- Federal public lands in Oregon and the West have a wide variety of public benefits such as recreation, habitat, grazing, forest harvest and mineral extraction, wildlife, hunting, scenic beauty, etc..
- Although not always done correctly, the federal government is the only entity that has the broad scope and understanding necessary to manage these lands in a systematic fashion.
- The individual states (as evidenced recently by the Elliot Forest problem) generally do not have the resources to study, protect, or manage these lands for the wider public benefits.
- The distribution of these federal lands is based on many historical accidents and does not always lend itself to efficient or best management, hence there are clearly some lands that might appropriately be transferred to state, non-governmental, or even private ownership.

I am not opposed to the concept of federal land evaluation but am opposed to HB 2365 because it is incomplete, too open to non-scientific interpretations, does not specify a public role, is incompletely written, and does not provide sufficient time for a truly thorough and rational study of these many lands and uses. Here are some key points.

1. Such a study should include all beneficial uses as evaluation criteria – these would include size, isolation access, habitat values, wilderness value, watershed values, recreational or commercial use, management difficulty, scenic value, historical and archeological value, and others. For example, a small (< 1 section) BLM parcel isolated in the middle of existing private pasturelands might be a good candidate for disposition.

2. Such a study should also include the evaluation of potential purchase of “priority acquisition lands” such as inholdings that create management difficulties or higher costs under current conditions. Inholdings along Wild and Scenic Rivers are one example.
3. Such a study should have the overriding goal of increasing the common public benefit and not trading public value for a short-term cash buy-out. There are many standard techniques to do this (such a matrix evaluations) and the evaluation process should be transparent.
4. Any proceeds from such transfers or dispositions should primarily be directed toward the acquisition of “priority acquisition lands”.

If we approach this rationally and with openness it can be a win-win for public values, environmental protection, and local communities.

I also want to note that the proposed bill is confusing in that it does not specifically identify all the various classes of federal lands and so makes it unclear whether it includes NRA lands, BuRec lands, DoD lands, National Monuments, National Wildlife Refuges, Wild and Scenic Rivers, WSA's or other specially designated federal lands.

This testimony is not offered on behalf of any organization. However, I am an activist with OLCV, Oregon Wild, OEC and other groups.

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