

For Immediate Release

Date: 1/20/26

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Oregon Senators McLane and Broadman, Oregon Hunters Association lead bipartisan effort to codify corner crossing

Senate Bill 1545 Seeks to improve and clarify public lands access while protecting neighboring landowners.

SALEM - Senator Mike McLane (R-Powell Butte) and Senator Anthony Broadman (D-Bend), working with the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA), introduced legislation this week to protect Oregonians' access to public lands through "corner crossing."

Corner crossing, or stepping from public land to public land where adjoining corners of public and private lands meet, has been a legal uncertainty in Oregon law. The Senators' legislation provides much needed clarity to protect public land users from allegations of trespass as well as landowners from allegations of negligence.

"Legal clarity improves access to public lands and protects landowners," said Senator McLane. "Oregonians deserve common sense from Salem on how and when we can access public resources. Senate Bill 1545 makes Oregonians' access to our lands clearer."

Balancing the public's right to access public land with necessary protections for private landowners, the legislation provides protection against negligence lawsuits. This has long been a troublesome issue for Oregonians who utilize public lands, where corner crossings are often necessary. This critical legislation will provide more certainty for all parties going forward.

"Our public lands are part of our heritage and who we are as Oregonians," said Senator Broadman. "Senate Bill 1545 will help preserve access for hunters exercising our rights to access federal lands across our state. We also owe it to the Tribes, ranchers, farmers, and timber owners to ensure corner crossing doesn't interfere with working Oregon lands and their stewardship of our state. Our proposal strikes that balance."

The bill has already garnered support from all sides of the political spectrum, including ten Republican and Democratic legislators from urban and rural districts alike. This diverse support shows that access to public lands is a bipartisan concern that resonates throughout the state.

"Oregon's public lands are incredibly important to hunters, hikers, bird watchers, anglers, and all Oregonians seeking to enjoy the state's natural beauty," said Amy Patrick, OHA's policy rep in Salem. "Providing some level of legal certainty ensures public land access when such access is vital to everything we do. OHA thanks Senators McLane and Broadman for spearheading this critical effort."

The legislation is broadly supported by the conservation, recreation and outdoor communities including Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation, Oregon Association of Shooting Ranges, Oregon Trappers Association, Oregon United Sporting Dogs Association, and, notably, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers who have long advocated that corner crossing is not a crime.

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