

**OREGON  
WILD**

Protecting Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters since 1974.

[www.oregonwild.org](http://www.oregonwild.org)

February 23, 2017

The Honorable Gene Whisnant  
900 Court St. NE  
H-383  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Dear Rep. Whisnant,**

On behalf of Oregon Wild's more than 20,000 members and supporters from all across our beautiful state, I am writing today to express our gratitude for your decision to withdraw your co-sponsorship for HB 2365, the bill to study the transfer of America's public lands to the Oregon state government.

As you know, we strongly opposed HB 2365 in our testimony before the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. Our members are incredibly diverse, running the gamut from Eastern Oregon elk hunters to Willamette Valley hikers to Oregon Coast kayakers and anglers. Our members also include thousands of Central Oregon residents who use and love the Deschutes National Forest, the Cascade Lakes, and public lands along the Wild and Scenic Deschutes River.

One thing that all of these proud Oregonians have in common is a love for our state's tremendous public lands heritage, and a desire to see it preserved and passed down for future generations to use and enjoy.

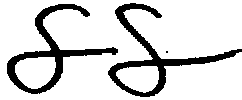
In recent weeks Oregon Wild and our sister groups have held a number of town hall meetings in Central Oregon to discuss threats to America's public lands, and we have found the response to be overwhelming. Hundreds of residents from communities like Bend, La Pine, Prineville, and Sisters have taken time out of their busy lives to come and attend these events to hear about proposals in Congress to dismantle America's federal public lands heritage, the warped ideology of the Bundys, and the possibility that Oregon may sell off the public land of the Elliott State Forest. More than anything, these people have attended these events to ask us what they can do to help protect the public lands that they love, and ensure their elected officials act on their values.

Rep. Whisnant, while we may not always see eye to eye on public lands management questions, we do believe there are opportunities to find common ground. For decades, Oregon Wild has worked with the Forest Service in Central Oregon to design and implement restoration thinning projects that protect and restore old-growth forests, reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires, and generate sustainable economic opportunities.

We have also worked to expand public lands recreational opportunities, support land managers who are trying to address illegal and destructive activities on public lands, and preserve Wilderness-quality lands as a haven for wildlife, and for Oregonians seeking freedom and solitude in the outdoors.

Moving forward, we would ask for the opportunity to engage with your office on how we best keep America's public lands in public hands, and resolve our disagreements over management. Public lands in Oregon, from Hells Canyon to Cape Perpetua, and from the Columbia Gorge to Steens Mountain, are a vital part of what makes our state so special. Let us work together to protect these natural treasures, and ensure they remain public and open to all forever.

Sincerely,



Sean Stevens  
Executive Director  
Oregon Wild  
[ss@oregonwild.org](mailto:ss@oregonwild.org)  
503.283.6343 ext 211

---

**Portland**  
5825 N. Greeley Ave.  
Portland, Oregon 97217  
tel: 503.283.6343

**Eugene**  
P.O. Box 11648  
Eugene, Oregon 97440  
tel: 541.344.0675

**Bend**  
16 NW Kansas Ave.  
Bend, Oregon 97701  
tel: 541.382.2616