



**REP. JOHN HUFFMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 59**

For Immediate Release

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Youth Camp Bill Passes Through Oregon Legislature

Salem, OR—A bill to allow the establishment of two new Young Life camps in Eastern Oregon, one for disabled children and one for teen mothers, is on its way to Gov. John Kitzhaber’s desk after passing the House and Senate this weekend.

Private investment totaling \$75 million has already been pledged for the project. However, legislation was necessary to make the project compatible with Oregon’s land use laws. Currently, there is no provision in Oregon law allowing the siting of youth camps on non-forest land. This bill, HB 3098, creates a process for low-quality farmland in Eastern Oregon outside of irrigation districts and at least three miles from urban growth boundaries to site a youth camp.

“I’m pleased that the legislature was able to overcome the challenges inherent in complex issues like this and pass a bill that will benefit citizens throughout under-served areas in Eastern Oregon,” said Rep. John Huffman (R-The Dalles), the chief sponsor of the legislation.

“This bill will allow youth camps to be sited on low-quality land in Eastern Oregon, and will continue to protect prime farmland, and takes into account the needs of local communities and neighbors who will have input in the process. The first two camps that will utilize this process will each be less than 50 acres on an Eastern Oregon ranch that literally covers 100 square miles. This is a great example of legislators from both parties coming together for good public policy,” said Rep John Davis (R-Wilsonville). Rep. Davis was a co-sponsor of the bill, along with Rep. Jason Conger (R-Bend), Rep. Sal Esquivel (R-Medford), Rep. Gene Whisnant (R-Sunriver), House Republican Leader Mike McLane (R-Powell Butte), Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) and Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena).

HB 3098 passed the House on Saturday, July 6 on a bipartisan 47-12 vote and passed the Senate the following day on a 23-7 vote. The bill also requires strict adherence to the protection of archaeological objects, sites, burials, funerary objects, human remains, objects of cultural patrimony and sacred objects in the development and use of the camp.

“This bill will enable us to take advantage of a substantial pledge of private donation to create a tremendous opportunity for a rural part of the state,” Rep. Huffman said. “I’m pleased that it is now on its way to be approved by Governor Kitzhaber and signed into law.”

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