

Members of the Committee,

I am providing testimony in support of H.B. 1175. This bill would guarantee access to over 700,000 acres of public lands that are held in trust by the state.

Through an Open Records request, we're able to see that in the last 5 years the number of acres closed to the public has grown from around 9,800 acres in 2019 to an alarming 20,000 acres last year. Furthermore, 96% of those closed acres happened to have an "Effective Start Date" between the months of August and December. While anecdotal, those dates are conveniently aligned with a majority of hunting seasons.

I firmly believe that ranchers, hunters, anglers, and anyone else that wishes to use the land can coexist on the landscape. 98% of trust lands is already being utilized in this way, as well as many tracts on the National Grasslands with minimal impact.

By allowing access to all of the State's Trust Lands, we can eliminate more barriers in the already contested space of the hunting public. Please, Do Pass, on HB 1175.