

Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act (S.2828)

The Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee (Malheur CEO) Act (S.2828) would provide Malheur County with important economic development opportunities, while protecting over 1.1 million acres of the most important and threatened ecological, recreational, and cultural places throughout Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands and public lands in Malheur County. S.2828 is both a landmark public lands conservation bill and a rural economic development bill that would:

- Safeguard the Owyhee's deep, red-rock canyons, rolling plains, wild rivers, and ample recreational opportunities for future generations;
- Protect the area's fascinating geology, rich ancient history, healthy wildlife habitat, and unique ecology;
- Prevent extractive and industrial development that would permanently damage these irreplaceable public lands;
- Ensure activities like fishing, boating, hunting, and hiking continue forever;
- Allow working farms and ranches to continue to operate; and
- Bolster local communities by investing in workforce development, improving infrastructure and encouraging sustainable tourism.

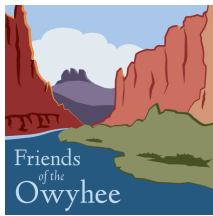
Guiding Principles

The Malheur CEO Act was developed with three main objectives: to support rural communities and economies, to protect the most vulnerable and wild places in Malheur County, and to do so without undermining bedrock conservation laws.

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden brought together ranchers, sportsmen and women, tribal nations, conservationists, county representatives, business leaders, and others to discuss how to improve the ecological and economic health of Malheur County. After months of consultation, the result was this pragmatic compromise that breaks decades of gridlock and offers a way forward in the face of urgent concerns like climate change and rampant fire cycles. Based on diverse stakeholder input, Senator Wyden designed The Malheur CEO Act to preserve wildlife habitat, pristine waterways, and backcountry recreation opportunities while respecting private property rights, improving public land access, improving the ecological health of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem, and supporting and diversifying local economies.

Key provisions in this bill include:

- Protect an astounding 1.1 million acres of the most important and threatened Malheur County public lands—including the Owyhee Canyonlands—as wilderness and add 15 miles of Wild and Scenic River in Oregon, forever safeguarding this intact landscape and staving off myriad threats
- Ensure ecological health is the driving force of public land management in Malheur County
- Preserve and protect tribal access to and use of ancestral lands in perpetuity
- Allow management flexibility and improves ecological health of the landscape through the use of responsive, science-based adaptive management
- Create a number of economic development opportunities for Malheur County, including investing in and developing restoration-focused research and workforce opportunities
- Create a monitoring network to ensure adaptive management leads to overall ecological improvements by engaging ranchers, businesses, conservationists, and federal, state and local agencies
- Maintain and improve access to public lands for all
- Set out the funding necessary to monitor, conduct adaptive management, and enforce the anticipated uses of and effects of this legislation on public lands in Malheur County



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MALHEUR COUNTY, OREGON: PROPOSED WILDERNESS

