



JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

Board of Commissioners

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10 South Oakdale, Room 214
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February 13, 2013

Senator Roblan and Senator Baertschiger
Co-Chairs, Senate Rural Communities and Economic Development Committee
900 Court St. NE, S-403 and S-417
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 331, Public Hearing 2/14/13, 3:00 PM

Dear Chairs and Members of the Committee:

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners (BoC) strongly urges your support for Senate Bill 331 (SB 331). This bill would alter the distribution of recreational vehicle (RV) licensing fees to benefit county parks programs across the state, which are currently shared with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). More specifically, the bill would allocate 50 percent of the fees received from RV registrations to county parks, an increase from the current allocation of 35 percent. The BoC believes the proposed allocation is equitable, as counties provide nearly 50 percent of campsites statewide when compared to the OPRD. Without the passage of this bill, the county allocation will revert to 30 percent in 2015, resulting in a loss of roughly \$820,000 for an already financially distressed county park system.

County parks and recreation programs play a key role in meeting the outdoor recreation needs of Oregonians. This is especially true in southern Oregon, more particularly Jackson County. Jackson County Parks manages a multitude of park sites totaling more than 7,000 acres of land and water. Park facilities provide access to four lakes, two rivers and over 600 campsites in Jackson County. These campsites are heavily used by local citizens and tourists alike, generating significant revenues for distressed rural southern Oregon communities.

In response to the decline in Federal timber payments, the Jackson County Budget Committee was forced to allocate General Fund support to mandated services. As such, like many other county parks programs in Oregon, Jackson County Parks has been removed from General Fund support. The program operates solely on revenues generated in County parks, state revenue sharing such as RV license fees, and special revenues including private lease and concession agreements. Under this model, and with some creative management, we have kept our parks open; however, revenues are insufficient to adequately tackle a growing backlog of deferred maintenance. A recent study identified over \$11 million in deferred maintenance projects in the Jackson County Park system.

These projects include much needed upgrades to sewage and potable water systems, park electrical system replacements, and other park infrastructure repairs. Many of these repairs are needed to maintain the self-sufficient operation of our revenue-generating park facilities. Jackson County has proven that we have the ability to keep our parks open to the public, generating economic development in rural southern Oregon, but we drastically need the increased funding from this bill to address our growing maintenance needs.

We urge your support of SB 331 which will help county parks systems throughout Oregon to continue contributing to the overall system of parks and recreation for our citizens. The increased funding is imperative to ensuring sustainable operations of the Jackson County Parks system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Skundrick', written in a cursive style.

Don Skundrick, Chair
Board of Commissioners

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