

Date: February 3, 2014

To: Senate Committee on Rural Communities & Economic Development

From: Jack Souhrada and Gladys I. Biglor

Re: SB-1514 Opposition

Dear Senators Arnie Roblan, Baertschiger Jr., Burdick, Close, Prozanski,

As avid users of Oregon State parks we are opposed to the proposal to erode State Park funding via SB-1514. We urge you to maintain the current funding formula.

Oregon **State** Parks are known throughout America's recreational vehicle (RV) and camping culture/industry as the jewels of Oregon. The superior quality of Oregon's **State** Parks is evident the minute users enter park property. People throughout America and Canada rave about the quality of our State Parks. Reducing funding for State parks while increasing agency work load (State Fair and State Capitol) is a **recipe for disaster**.

Budget reductions in other states have resulted in dramatic declines in their parks while Oregon **State** Parks has managed to prevent similar disasters. We know because we use them. Oregon State Parks is projecting a \$1.1 million dollar loss in the current biennium. That loss is projected to increase to \$4.7 million dollars by the 2015-2017 biennium. No agency can survive at current quality levels given those kinds of losses.

From a business perspective I understand and applaud the desire to be as cost effective as possible. SB-1514 is not the answer. During the summer recreational season our State Parks are packed, especially our coastal parks. In the last two years the few parks which have never been completely full are bursting at the seams, regularly turning away users yet the agency has had to curtail park acquisition and focus on maintenance, even at minimal levels, given budgetary reductions.

Contrary to some representatives beliefs (Senator Chris Edwards D-Eugene and Representative Ben Under D-Hillsboro) RV'ers and campers are intelligent and DO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE between Federal, State, County, and Private parks. Representative Bruce Hanna R-Roseburg is correct when he warns SB-1514 has the potential to destroy our State Parks. Please know that intelligent OR State Park users do know the government distinction between parks. What many of us didn't know until now is that a portion of our STATE PARK user fees are being directed to counties. When did that happen? That's an outrage! In all fairness state park fees need to remain with state parks as does county park fees with county parks with agencies living within their means.

We urge a vote against SB-1514.

Jack Souhrada and Gladys Biglor

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Cc/Sen Tim Knopp, Representative Gene Whisnant and Representative Jason Conger, Oregon Parks & Recreation Commission.