



Oregon

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February 20, 2014

Honorable Chris Edwards and Ben Unger, Co-chairs
Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 1516-A

Dear Co-chairs Edwards and Unger, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are pleased to appear before you in support of Senate Bill 1516-A. The bill would do much to advance our exploration of a rails-and-trails concept along the former Pacific Railway and Navigation Company line, between Tillamook Bay and Banks.

Our two departments—Forestry and Parks and Recreation—have joined with many partners to answer the initial call from Tillamook County and the Port of Tillamook Bay to begin to evaluate how this visionary project might come to fruition.

The project is rich with potential. The rail line, built in 1911, was an extraordinary feat of engineering and construction, traversing rugged, beautiful territory in the Coast Range. The opportunity before us today is to explore restoring the line, which was ravaged by historic storms and flooding in 2007, to create a wealth of recreational, educational and community development benefits.

SB 1516-A gives our agencies specific direction and authority to work with local jurisdictions and private partners to look more deeply at all aspects—including costs, benefits, development and operation—of a Salmonberry recreational corridor. Further, it charges us with investigating the full range of public and private funding sources, and with reporting back to the Legislature in 2015.

SB 1516-A provides a solid foundation for our work, ensures that communities and stakeholders will have a role in the process, and provides the Legislature with additional opportunities to evaluate the potential public benefits of a Salmonberry recreational corridor.

We extend our thanks to our many partners, and to Senator Johnson for her work in bringing this legislation forward. We're happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,


Doug Decker
Oregon State Forester


Lisa Van Laanen
Interim Director
Parks and Recreation Department