



2/24/2014

Senator Chris Edwards and Representative Ben Unger  
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: SB 1514, RV Fee Distribution  
Work Session 2/25/2014, 1:00 PM

Co-Chairs Edwards, Unger and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Parks Association (OPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 1514. Counties play an active role in delivering outdoor recreation facilities as part of the statewide system of park providers. Specifically, counties provide a very important close-to-home recreational opportunity for many rural communities that do not have a strong presence by other providers. These facilities add to the overall strength of rural communities, providing an opportunity for active recreation, contributing to the health of Oregon's youth and stimulating the economic vitality of distressed communities. County parks provide over one third of valuable public water access sites in the state, allowing opportunities for Oregonians to recreate on the waters that they so avidly pursue. Additionally, when compared to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), counties provide a nearly equal amount of overnight camping facilities. These facilities bring tourists into parts of the state that may otherwise struggle to generate outside revenue. Perhaps more importantly, they provide a local and affordable camping experience that all families should be able to enjoy, regardless of today's fiscal reality.

When fully implemented in 2015, SB 1514 will provide counties with an additional 10% of recreational vehicle licensing fees. This additional revenue will be used by Oregon's counties to tackle deferred projects and assist in funding the operations of your county parks systems. Without the passage of SB 1514 counties will lose approximately \$800,000 of annual RV licensing fee revenues beginning July 1, 2015. This loss will devastate already distressed county park programs, resulting in drastic service level cuts and continued deterioration of already stressed facilities. It is imperative that the additional funds allocated by SB 1514 are received to maintain an acceptable service level to our customers and preserve the path to financial sustainability that county park programs have diligently pursued.

The concepts of this bill were brought before the legislature in the 2013 session with the hopes that county parks can immediately begin tackling the deferred maintenance needs across the state, which combined total in excess of eighty million dollars. OPA is very appreciative of the Oregon Solutions Team process that your committee prescribed in the 2013/2015 Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) budget note, directing counties and OPRD to collaborate on a solution to the issue. The Solutions Team process allowed all parties to effectively communicate their respective needs in an effort to deliver the best possible outcome, aimed at assisting counties

to address maintenance needs, while managing the effects to the OPRD budget. As a result, we feel that SB 1514 is an effective piece of legislation that if passed, symbolizes the spirit of cooperation amongst recreation providers to ensure that the outdoor recreation needs of Oregonians in all corners of the state are met. The agreement reached as part of the Solutions Process is supported by OPRD, Counties, and OPA. We are hopeful that the agreement will be supported by the legislature as well.

Counties need the support of your committee to continue providing safe, accessible, local outdoor recreation opportunities for our citizens. I respectfully ask that you support this bill.

Respectfully,

Steve Lambert

OPA Legislative Chair