



April 7, 2015

To: House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water
The Honorable Brian Clem, Chair The Honorable David Gomberg
The Honorable Ken Helm, Vice-Chair The Honorable Brad Witt
The Honorable Bill Post, Vice-Chair The Honorable Mike McLane, House Republican Leader
The Honorable Vic Gilliam

RE: Opposition of House Bill 3367 by the Oregon Recreation and Park Association

On behalf of nearly 1,000 members of the Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA), including 62 park and recreation agencies as well as professionals, and volunteers, we are writing to express opposition to House Bill 3367, which would authorize local government to conditionally approve the establishment of recreational trails on land zoned for exclusive farm use.

We oppose this legislation for a variety of reasons.

Currently the establishment of recreational trails is an outright allowable use of exclusive farm use (EFU) lands. To change the system now simply adds an unnecessarily burdensome approval layer to a process that has worked well for many years.

This current system has supported the creation of many hundreds of miles of trails in EFU lands, which have provided significant health and recreational benefit to the greater public in Oregon and strong economic benefit to communities in which these trails have been located. Further, trail development by park and recreation agencies already is subject to local jurisdictions' planning and approval processes that have been established by the agency and the jurisdiction.

Additionally, many new trails are developed on existing transportation ways and corridors, e.g. railroad lines. Where this occurs, recreational trails are simply changing of the *type* of transportation method (to a less impactful nonmotorized one) rather than changing from one type of land use to a transportation land use.

Further this legislation is quite likely to:

- Create additional administrative effort and costs for land use permitting agencies who will see an increase in conditional use permits;
- Threaten the linkage of communities who seek to develop nonmotorized trail and transportation linkages (bicycle, pedestrian, etc.) which necessarily must be routed through lands that are designated Exclusive Farm Use, which can impact residents' transportation selection and opportunities for recreation and exercise. For example, the central Oregon communities of Bend, Prineville, Redmond, and Sisters are currently working collaboratively to establish a regional trail linking each community; this project and others like it would be significantly hindered under the proposed legislation.
- Overly politicize the trail development process by adding a review process that is conducted by elected officials;
- Extend the time and cost of public trail planning and development by adding another process, hearings, etc.;

- Potentially increase acquisition costs for the creation of new trails as it could create an environment in which private land owners could have even greater leverage to negotiating easements at a significantly higher rate; and
- Create a greater burden for private landowners who favor allowing public uses on their properties by adding an additional permitting layer that hampers their ability to allow recreational trail uses on their properties.

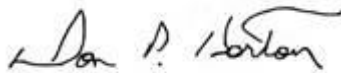
The current outright allowable use of recreational trails on EFU lands has worked well for many years and to great benefit. To change the system now would dramatically impact all park and recreation agencies' ability to develop new trails for public benefit in the future. For these reasons, we strongly encourage you to oppose House Bill 3367.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact either of us or Cindy Robert, ORPA's lobbyist, if we may offer any additional information to the Committee.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Redman, Executive Director



Don Horton, Legislative Committee Chair