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Testimony to the House Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee on House Concurrent Resolution 8

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council enthusiastically endorses House Concurrent Resolution 8 celebrating the 50th anniversary of Oregon's Beach Bill.

We want to thank Representatives Gomberg, Brock Smith, Boone and McKeown and Senator Roblan for their recognition of the importance and continued commitment to the free and uninterrupted use of Oregon's world famous beaches for all.

Oregon Environmental Council has a close connection with this anniversary. Our first President, Maradel Gale, was a coordinator for Beaches Forever, the group that elevated awareness about threats to public access to Oregon's beaches and successfully advocated for the Beach Bill. A year after the Beach Bill was passed the Oregon Environmental Council was established, and working to find the solution for ensuring public access to Oregon's beaches provided the model for the collaborative, bipartisan approach we continue to follow today to protect our state's ecological heritage.

The Beach Bill should also be celebrated as it set the stage for other important actions. It resonated because it stood for access to an ecological treasure for all, but also because it showed the value of Oregonians speaking out for their natural resources. People who cared about Oregon began to show up in record numbers in Salem - calling for environmental protections such as the bottle bill, billboard removal bill, pollution controls to cars, and using a percentage of highway funding for bike and recreational trails.

We join you in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Beach Bill, and look forward to working with you to protect our air, water and incredible natural landscapes into the future.