



April 4, 2017
Support for HCR 8

Chair Evans and Members of the House Committee on Veterans & Emergency Preparedness,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 8, a resolution honoring Oregon's Beach Bill during this year's 50th anniversary of its passage and recognizing our continued commitment to upholding this landmark legislation. On behalf of our Newport Coos Bay, Siuslaw and Portland Chapters, Curry and Clatsop Organizing Committees and our greater statewide membership in Oregon, we strongly support HCR 8 and urge your yes vote.

Oregon's 362 miles of public ocean beaches are the signature feature of the Oregon coast, wild and rugged much in part due to Oregon's famed 1967 Beach Bill legislation, forever granting public access and limiting development on our dry, sandy beaches. Whether an inland day-tripper, weekend warrior or die-hard coastal resident, our beaches are our birthright and Oregonians were born with the right to freely access and enjoy this wild and scenic coastal gem. As a coastal state, this landmark legislation sets Oregon apart from other states, where miles of beaches are inaccessible to the public, require a "pay to play" approach, and often are set aside for the wealthy or developed for the interest of capital. But Oregon has taken a different approach, granting these dry sandy beaches as a public right – no matter your race, religion, wealth or background, Oregon's beaches are here for the public, a sanctuary for the recreational interests of all.

While this unique approach to beach policy and management has put the public's interest before those of the elite and capital interests, it is recognized that today our beaches nonetheless remain the principal economic driver for our coast – far exceeding their value in tourism and recreation when compared to states with similar coastal demographics such as Washington. The Beach Bill legislation and resulting management of our beaches has pushed Oregon's beach economy ahead of states favoring the privatization of beaches and tidal lands, underscoring the importance and significance of this policy approach. Today, over **21 million visitors** enjoy Oregon's beaches contributing **over \$2.4 billion in annual expenditures** directly to our coastal economy

As an organization dedicated to the public's enjoyment of our beaches, Surfrider Foundation is highly active in other states with countless legal battles trying to secure public access to beaches that have been privatized by development and in many cases, unlawful and sheer selfish interest. I'm proud that this is not the case in Oregon, and shall never be the case under our current Beach Bill legislation.

In honor of this remarkable foresight in planning and public interest by both the late Oswald West and Tom McCall, we urge your yes vote on HCR 8 this session to both recognize and reaffirm our commitment to Oregon's Beach Bill legislation. As generations have enjoyed our beaches over the past 50 years, our strengthened commitment to this policy will support this birthright for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Charlie Plybon
Oregon Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation