

May 3, 2017

Testimony of
Robert Bailey, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
On Senate Bill 745, Establishes Ocean Beach Fund
Before the
Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Chairman Haas, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Committee Members:

My name is Robert Bailey. I represent the Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition with more than 900 members. Oregon Shores strongly supports this bill to create the Ocean Beach Fund.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Oregon's famous Beach Bill that guarantees the public's right to use the entire beach everywhere. The Ocean Beach Fund is a critical step to ensure that these beaches are not just accessible to the public but that they are safe, clean, and available for future generations of visitors. As we invite more and more people from across the country and around the world to enjoy our beautiful beaches we must step up our commitment to taking care of them.

For more than 45 years, Oregon Shores has advocated and litigated for protection of Oregon's public beaches. We have more than a thousand volunteer CoastWatchers who adopt a mile of beach and walk it regularly to monitor its condition.

We see the need for the Ocean Beach Fund because our CoastWatch volunteers see how our beaches are used and sometimes misused. They find, report and help clean up marine debris, some of it dangerous. They find vandalism and trash left by those who do not value the beach. They encounter families enjoying the beach but warn them about playing on logs near the water's edge. They find stranded marine mammals and report them to ODFW. They discover beach sands that have been illegally bulldozed and riprap stones dumped along the shore without a permit. They find the remains of illegal and ill-advised activities that put other beachgoers at risk. They even see derelict structures that must be removed. But

our volunteers can only do so much to observe and report. The Ocean Beach Fund will enable State Parks to step in and address these and many other issues.

We understand the concerns about the impact of the Ocean Beach Fund on the budget of Travel Oregon. And while we admire Travel Oregon's ability to market our state, we believe that the State of Oregon must ramp up its efforts to keep pace with increased visitor use of our ocean beaches. We would gladly settle for a little less promotion of our beaches, which already have a worldwide reputation, and more stewardship to keep our beaches from being degraded by overuse, abuse and neglect.

The money for the Ocean Beach Fund would come from the state lodging tax on campers in coastal state park campgrounds along the ocean shore. We think it is entirely appropriate to dedicate these funds, which are spent at the beach, to taking care of the beach.

We urge you to invest in the future of Oregon's ocean beach and approve SB 745.