



CITY OF West Linn

May 5, 2017

Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE, Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 327

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of West Linn and its 25,615 residents, we encourage you to support SB327 and its Senate-recommended amendments.

This is a very critical issue for our City and for all cities in Oregon that manage parks and open spaces available to residents and visitors. West Linn is home to a number of parks, including Willamette Park, Fields Bridge Park, Hammerle Park, Maddax Woods, Wilderness Park, Tanner Creek Park, and Mary S. Young State Park (which is maintained and operated by the City). All are in jeopardy if the City or our partner agencies are unable to afford or obtain the insurance necessary to allow for continued operation. The financial threats posed by such legislation also undermine cities' and communities' goals to encourage outdoor activities and recreation in all forms.

Willamette Park, for instance, is one of West Linn's larger and more utilized parks and is a gem for our community and for the Metro region. This park hosts ongoing sports tournaments for players throughout the Northwest, City-wide special events like our Old Time Fair, has a water feature, playground equipment, picnicking areas, and heavily-utilized boat docks and ramps with unparalleled access to the Willamette River. This beautiful multipurpose park is, like hundreds of others throughout the state, at risk.

Public access to recreational opportunities on private lands via trail easements or other access and usage partnerships may cease to exist without recreational immunity for private landowners as well. For example, approximately one-third of Willamette Park is on private land and is made available to the public through a lease. We are also working to continue our Willamette River Greenway Trail to Willamette Falls through an easement across West Linn Paper Company property. Without recreational immunity, West Linn's Trails Master Plan, as well as many other recreational plans across Oregon will be in jeopardy. That's why this bill is so critical. It's a reasonable, balanced solution to a very real problem that I am sure the Legislature never intended.

On behalf of the citizens of West Linn, and thousands of others who visit our beautiful parks each year, **we urge your support of SB327**. Thank you for your time on this vital issue.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Axelrod
Mayor, City of West Linn