

Date: June 30, 2017

To: Capital Construction Subcommittee, Joint Committee on Ways and Means

From: Dan Hilburn

Re: HB 3149 relating to the Oregon Coast Trail

Ten reasons to support HB 3149A with the -4 amendments:

1. No fiscal impact (with -4 amendments)
2. Bipartisan support
3. No opposition
4. Oregon Coast Trail would benefit economies of coastal communities without adding more vehicles to Hwy 101
5. Unique opportunity for a world-class coastal village-to-village trail
6. Trail is 85% done; only 57 miles of 367 total miles left to finish
7. State already controls a right-of-way bridging all the remaining gaps
8. Support from OPRD, ODOT, Oregon Coast Visitors Association and Travel Oregon
9. Citizen-initiated bill
10. Fitting tribute to 50th anniversary of Oregon's Beach Bill

Please accept the -4 amendments and recommend passage of the Oregon Coast Trail Bill, HB 3149A.

Thank you.

Oregon Coast Trail

An Unfinished Gem with Economic Development Potential

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Oregon’s landmark Beach Bill that established the public’s right to uninterrupted use of Oregon’s shoreline and beaches. We are also approaching the 50th anniversary of the Oregon Recreation Trails System Act. These laws are the reason Oregonians and visitors can enjoy miles and miles of extraordinary beach walks and coastal day hikes today. However, the crown jewel, the Oregon Coast Trail, remains unfinished. The good news is that over half of the trail consists of public beaches ready-made for walking. Existing trails connect many of these segments. The remaining gaps amount to just 57 miles of the whole 367-mile coast! A world-class destination trail is within reach, and the associated economic benefits for coastal communities could be impressive.

Let’s close the gaps and finish the Oregon Coast Trail as a tribute to the 50th anniversaries of the Beach Bill and the Oregon Recreation Trails Systems Act!

Largest Existing Gaps

1. Barview Jetty to Garibaldi Marina	Tillamook County	2 miles
2. Bob Straub State Park to Winema Road	Tillamook County	6 miles
3. Neskowin Beach to Roads End	Tillamook & Lincoln Cos.	7 miles
4. Schooner Creek to Gleneden Beach	Lincoln County	3.5 miles
5. Cummins Creek to Muriel Ponsler Mem.	Lane County	6.5 miles
6. Heceta Head to Baker Beach	Lane County	4 miles
7. Empire Docks to Charleston	Coos County	5 miles
8. Cape Arago to Seven Devils Wayside	Coos County	7 miles
9. Humbug Mt. to Ophir Wayside	Curry County	11 miles
10. Pistol River to Arch Rock	Curry County	5.5 miles

Some of these gaps lend themselves to scenic connector trails to take advantage of outstanding views, while other gaps could be closed using the U.S. Highway 101 right-of-way. Here are some examples:



dangerous



much better



Economic Potential

Today the Oregon coast is a popular place for beach walking, but very few people attempt to thru-hike. Two cars are required to set up shuttles in order to avoid dangerous, unpleasant highway walking. However, the potential of the Oregon Coast Trail to attract long-distance walking enthusiasts is immense. Once finished, it could bring thousands of new visitors from around the world to enjoy the spectacular scenery and unspoiled beaches.

The Oregon coast, with its string of small towns, is **ready-made for village-to-village walking**. Active retired people around the world are leading a boom in long-distance walking in which every night is spent in a comfortable bed and meals are eaten at restaurants. Several hundred thousand walkers complete the 500-mile village-to-village Camino de Santiago in Spain each year! Using a luggage transport service and staying in village inns and B & B's is not yet common in the U.S., but the potential here is huge and the Oregon Coast Trail could be one of the world's finest village-to-village walks.

With sufficient infrastructure to allow village-to-village walking (food and lodging every 10 to 15 miles), the economic impact of thousands of walkers buying food and lodging could amount to millions of dollars annually without adding to congestion on the roads.

World's Best Village-to-Village Walks

	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Users/yr</u>
<i>[Oregon Coast Trail]</i>	367	TBD
Camino de Santiago (Spain)	495	278,000
Queen Charlotte Track (NZ)	44	30,000
Coast to Coast Path (England)	199	10,000
88 Temples Trail (Japan)	670	2,000

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