



A COMPREHENSIVE  
MOUNTAINEERING ORGANIZATION  
SINCE 1894

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Mountaineering  
Rock Climbing  
Climbing Education  
Hiking  
Nordic Skiing  
First Aid Courses  
Conservation  
Trail Maintenance  
Adventure Travel

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February 15, 2017

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Subcommittee on Natural Resources:

Co-Chair The Honorable Lew Frederick,  
Co-Chair The Honorable Brad Witt,  
The Honorable Fred Girod  
The Honorable Kathleen Taylor  
The Honorable Sal Esquivel  
The Honorable Ken Helm  
The Honorable Karin Power

Re: Support of HB 5028

On behalf of the 3,700 members of the Mazamas, I am writing to encourage the Subcommittee's support and passage of HB 5028 to fund the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) for the 2017 biennium.

The Mazamas were formed on the summit of Mount Hood in 1894 and have a 120+ year legacy of promoting responsible recreation, outdoor education and conservation values in Oregon. In addition to teaching thousands of people each year the art of mountaineering and its various disciplines, the Mazamas strives to protect our public lands. We also represent the unified voices of mountaineers, rock climbers, hikers, backpackers, trail runners, and many other human-powered recreationists throughout Oregon.

We also want to say that outdoor recreation in Oregon is sometimes considered a wish-list item in our priority lists, when in our view it should be a must-have. Responsible outdoor recreation is core to the very character and quality of life we all enjoy in Oregon. It's a primary part of why many of us live here, why so many people move here, and love it here. In our mind, our state parks system is one of the most beloved and highly regarded in the country.

When people, and children in particular spend time recreating outside it improves their mental and physical health, their engagement with their community, their interest in learning and education, and helps them develop conservation values.

So supporting this bill, and funding for OPRD is about more than adequately caring for, managing, and improving our state parks, it's an investment in helping to get Oregonian's outside, in outdoor Recreation and the quality of life of our state's citizens.



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OPRD's staff is a pleasure to work with and they continue to lead by example which is obvious in our many well-maintained parks, natural areas, and historic sites. In addition to tirelessly pursuing its mission, OPRD is an agency that innovates. The Regional Recreation Coalitions that OPRD created in the last biennium helped to create a new network of outdoor recreation service providers. We are also encouraged to see that OPRD staff is taking time to be part of Travel Oregon's Outdoor Recreation (Means Business) Initiative. The output of this effort will help inform a long-term vision for Oregon's outdoor recreation future that includes tourism and sustainable recreation development.

Finally, we are happy to report that the Director's Office was directly involved in working with the Mazamas, Access Fund and other outdoor recreation groups last year to create the Pacific Northwest's first "Sustainable Climbing Conference" held in Portland. This event brought together a niched and powerful group of outdoor recreation program leaders. By addressing emerging issues around sustainable recreation, OPRD and its partners are moving forward in protecting parks, natural spaces and our historic sites. Together we are all thinking about the long-term benefit that all Oregonians receive from the enjoying outdoor recreation.

OPRD is a vital part of Oregon's outdoor recreation future especially in ensuring that the next generation of children have the same experiences as we do today. Affordable access to state parks is a big issue for our members so we hope that modest fee increases remain the trend rather than total reliance of a "pay to play" system. By creating access to affordable parks, working families enjoy public lands. We believe that no other public agency in Oregon is better suited to help connect underserved communities, rural areas and communities of color to the great outdoors.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me for more information about supporting OPRD's budget request or other recreation and public lands issues.

Sincerely,

Lee Davis,  
Executive Director  
Mazamas

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