



Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources
Co-Chairs Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 5527 and Oregon Parks & Recreation Department Budget

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Joint Subcommittee:

On behalf of Oregon Outdoors, I write today in strong support of the proposed budget for the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department. Oregon Outdoors (www.oregonoutdoors.org) is a recently-established and rapidly growing coalition of more than thirty outdoor recreation businesses, recreation organizations, and conservation groups committed to the preservation of Oregon's outdoor assets for future generations. Although we support strong funding for all of Oregon's natural resource agencies, the Oregon Park & Recreation Department plays a unique role in providing for Oregon's outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

In particular, we strongly support continued funding for the Office of Outdoor Recreation, created by the Legislature in 2017. In the short amount of time it's been in operation, the OOR has helped advance conversations core to outdoor recreation interests, including Search and Rescue operations, waterway access, and Oregon's growing outdoor gear and apparel industry. We have very high hopes for the role this office will play in coordinating between multiple agencies and private partners on an array of important issues for outdoor recreation in this state.

We support the major elements of this budget including: budget support for the Oregon Coast Trail and policy package 105 which enhances the Department's ability to reach Oregonians currently not accessing the state park system. We believe that Oregon's outdoors can and should be accessible and enjoyable to all Oregonians.

"OPRD is focused on connecting everyone to Oregon's special places because no one should feel unwelcome in an Oregon park. No one should feel that Oregon's parks are off limits to them. Initial small steps include having conversations, listening to one other and learning to understand each other's perspectives. This is vital to treating each other and park visitors with respect. OPRD is engaging in a model of "Engage, Relate, Adapt".

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5527. We urge your strong support for the full proposal before you today and hope to continue strengthening funding for Oregon's recreational assets in budgets to come.

Sincerely,

Hugh Morrison

Hugh Morrison - Network Coordinator - Oregon Outdoors