



**Oregon
Outdoors**

March 18, 2019

House Committee On Natural Resources
Chair Representative Witt, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Gorsek, Representative
Sprengr, Members of the Committee. 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 2835

Chair Representative Witt, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Gorsek
and Representative Sprengr, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Outdoors, I write today in support of HB 2829. 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.

Our coalition has established legislative priorities that members have determined fit several components of Oregon's outdoor industry that are of particular importance to the coalition and represent our collective voice and long terms interests for the future of the industry in our state. These priorities include, but are not limited to: outdoor recreation access, recreation infrastructure, economic vitality, and support for responsible recreation. HB 2835 speaks to several of these priorities by:

- Creating a public process through which state agencies would engage in a public review process for public waterway access closures greater than 30 days in length. The legislation allows for exceptions for emergencies such as wildfire and for critical wildlife and ecological management activities, as well as for short-term construction and/or site improvement related closures.
- Requiring state agencies to produce an annual report to the legislature that includes the number of waterway access sites that have been closed by state agencies and the reasons for each closure as well as the number and locations of new/re-opened public access sites.
- Enhancing public access to public waterways by incorporating an access feasibility assessment into new state bridge construction projects. While not obligating state agencies to make improvements, this would encourage interagency coordination on access projects where access improvements opportunities are identified.

Outdoor recreation is part of the cultural heritage of Oregon – the Outdoor Industry Association estimates 69% of Oregonians recreate outside each year (well above the national average of 49%). And for many, boating is central to their outdoor experience. As the population of Oregon grows, we must preserve and expand the opportunities for all Oregonians to access our public waterways. It is important to our public health, our economic health, and to our identity as Oregonians.

For the reasons stated above, I ask that you please support the amended HB 2835.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hugh Morrison", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Hugh Morrison
Network Coordinator
Oregon Outdoors