



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

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House Committee on Natural Resources

Chair Brad Witt

Vice-Chair Chris Gorsek

Vice-Chair Sherrie Sprenger

Representative Greg Barreto

Representative Caddy McKeown

Representative Jeff Reardon

Representative David Brock Smith

March 28, 2019



RE: HB 2835 Establishes public right to recreational use of certain public use waterways.

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger and Committee Members,

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has no position on HB 2835, related to uses of Oregon waterway for recreation, but we'd like you to be aware of the overlap between the bill and our mission to provide all Oregonians with memorable outdoor recreation opportunities.

Providing healthful, fulfilling outdoor recreation experiences requires three things: 1) access to 2) quality natural resources, and 3) awareness among Oregonians about the existence of both.

Within the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, our rangers and other staff work to protect resources and deliver these experiences to ever-greater numbers of our residents eager to connect with the landscape through genuine experiences. We know full well that many outings start or end within a state park, but transcend our property borders. As a strong advocate for natural outdoor recreation in all its forms, we encourage people to explore the rich diversity of Oregon through the network of public lands managed by local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

Solid coordination among these stewards is necessary to serve both die-hard patrons of outdoor recreation, and to lower the barrier of entry to people who are new to these pursuits. There are moves afoot to improve service to underserved groups, identify common resource management issues, and secure long-term funding across all providers. HB 2835 describes standards and unified thinking to encourage cooperation among agencies that provide access to public waterways, which may protect and improve existing waterway accesses and reduce confusion among people participating in these pursuits.

The recently-completed draft of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and State Trails Plan both support the need for continued networking among recreation providers and protection of access and use of public waterways. We see value in continued conversation on this and similar matters, including dialog within the legislative process on this bill. Let us know if you'd like more information on the intersection between HB 2835 and Oregon's outdoor recreation goals.

With regards,

Chris Havel

Associate Director, Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept.