



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

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Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

May 7, 2019



Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair

Senator Alan Olsen, Vice-Chair

Senator Cliff Bentz

Senator Floyd Prozanski

Senator Arnie Roblan

RE: HB 2835A-4 Establishes public right to recreational use of certain public use waterways.

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Olsen, and Committee Members,

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department supports HB 2835A, with the -4 amendments, related to uses of Oregon waterways for recreation. This bill aligns with OPRD's 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 2835A 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 2835A and Oregon's outdoor recreation goals.

With regards,

Chris Havel

Associate Director, Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept.