



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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RE: Testimony on SB 794

Chair Golden, Vice-chair Heard, Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) has no position on Senate Bill 794, but would like to share information with you about the current approach to state park visitor fees.

The bill proposes OPRD set state park fees associated with recreational vehicles 25% higher for nonresidents than for Oregon residents. At the moment, this would apply to state park campsite rental rates, but not other state park services. The rates for single-occupancy RV campsites currently range from \$24 to \$40 dollars a night, so if the bill were in effect today, RV campsite rates would be \$30 to \$50 for nonresidents.

The state park system hasn't been supported by general fund taxes since the 1997-99 budget, and instead relies on three main sources of funding: visitor fees, a share of Lottery dedicated by Oregon voters—first in 1998, and then again in 2010—and a share of RV license plate revenue paid by Oregonians. There is a small amount of federal funding in the state park system, mainly reimbursement for some repairs through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For most of its history, visitors pay the same campsite rates regardless of where they live. To encourage people to stay close to home for outdoor recreation, OPRD did implement a temporary (from September 2020 through February 2021) extra charge of up to 30% for campers from out of state. During that time, we would normally expect out-of-staters to make up about 40% of campers. While the surcharge was in place, they accounted for 35%. The fee may have had something to do with it, though there were many other factors affecting travel between states.

Coming up with reliable ways to define and establish state of residence, especially for people who arrive without a reservation, can be challenging but not impossible. Most stays are reserved in advance through a centralized online and phone-in system. Even before this bill was introduced, OPRD was setting plans to have a public conversation about the idea of making an out-of-state surcharge a normal part of the state park rate structure using our existing authority to set rules for rates within a legislatively-approved range.

Thank you for the opportunity to share background about the revenue sources used to support daily state park operations.

State Park System Est. Funding 19-21

