



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Parks and Recreation Department

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RE: Testimony on SB 795

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

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) has no position on Senate Bill 795, but would like to share information with you about the current approach to state park visitor fees.

The bill proposes OPRD set an extra state park use fee for nonresidents adding up to 30% beyond what Oregon residents pay. As written, this would apply to all camping and day-use services with an approved fee. Of the 50+ state park campgrounds, all but one charge a fee. Of the ~250 day-use areas, 25 charge a fee for parking a motor vehicle. Most, but not all, campers make a reservation to stay in advance. Except for special group facilities, most daytime visitors purchase a daily parking permit at a state park, very often through an automated pay station without interacting with staff.

The state park system hasn't been supported by general fund taxes since the 1997-99 budget, and instead relies on three main fund sources: visitor fees, a share of Lottery dedicated by Oregon voters 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.

Coming up with reliable ways to establish state of residence for campers, especially for people who arrive without a reservation, can be challenging but not impossible. Identifying the state of residence for daytime visitors would be much more difficult, given the lack of contact with staff and the inaccurate nature of things like vehicle license plates to indicate residence. A system to collect funding from day-visitors needs to strike the balance between being 1) fair, 2) accurate, and 3) cost-effective to implement; we can imagine several ways to hit the first two marks, but they don't hit the third. Either in the bill or through rule, defining nonresident would be important.

OPRD has been giving thought to the viability of the current approach to charging a fair, nominal fee for day-use parks as part of the funding mix needed to sustain park services. While none of the ideas are mature enough to bring forward yet, removing barriers to attendance, making them cost-effective to administer, and finally finding a combination of funding solutions that provide the state park system with long-term stability are all important factors in the discussion.

Thank you for the opportunity to share background on this important topic.

State Park System Est. Funding 19-21

