



January 25, 2023

To: House Committee on Economic Development & Small Business

Subject: Support of HB2909

Dear Committee Members,

Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) is a vital partner to the Waldport Chamber of Commerce and small businesses in our coastal rural community. OCVA supports our efforts to identify and fund projects that directly benefit our local economy.

The Waldport Chamber of Commerce, a non-profit organization, is the hub of activity and outreach for residents and visitors throughout the year. Our core mission is to provide resources and extensive outreach to our small business owners through media partnerships as well as city, county, and statewide relationships.

On behalf of the City of Waldport, we operate and staff the Alsea Bay Bridge Visitor Center & Waldport Heritage Museum. The Center welcomed more than 7,500 visitors from 42 states and 18 countries in 2022, providing resources such as maps, brochures, outdoor recreation materials and extensive displays of the history of our area. We represent the indigenous Alsi Indians and early pioneers and partner with organizations that enrich the lives of everyone who visits and resides in the area.

In November of 2022, we partnered with Oregon Black Pioneers, the City of Waldport and OCVA to unveil a life-size sculpture of Mr. Louis Southworth, an enslaved black pioneer who lived in the area and donated land for the first schoolhouse in Waldport. A new City Park will be named the Louis Southworth Park, with construction completed by the end of 2024. The sculpture, which currently resides on display at the Alsea Bay Bridge Visitor Center, will be placed at the entrance of the new park along with plaques celebrating the Alsi Indians.

This is one example of how Waldport, in partnership with OCVA, actively celebrates diversity, equity and inclusion, strengthening our economic growth and creating a welcoming environment for all people. We encourage you to support HB2909.

Sincerely,

Tom Fullmer

Tom Fullmer, Executive Director
Waldport Chamber of Commerce