



TO: Joint Ways & Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association

DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: Support for SB 5527

Please consider this letter of support for the Oregon Park & Recreation Department (OPRD) budget as detailed in SB 5527. OPRD has proven itself an excellent partner, leader and convener for parks and recreation agencies around our state. The Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA) is made up of more than 2,200 members, including 68 park and recreation agencies as well as professionals and volunteers – all of whom appreciate the work of OPRD.

Millions of people benefit directly from their state and local park and recreation agencies in many ways—as gathering places to meet with friends and family, open spaces to exercise and reconnect with nature or as community resources where they can get a nutritious meal. Parks add significant value and benefits to their communities in terms of conservation, health & wellness and social equity.

Oregon State Parks have more than 50 million park visits per year. Visitors to Oregon state parks contribute more than \$1.1 billion to the state's economy and support 16,000 full- and part-time jobs, according to a report released by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). Over \$1.5 Million in lodging taxes were paid by visitors in 2022. And according to a 2019 report of the National Recreation and Park Association, the impact of Oregon's local park and recreation agency spending on the state economy was \$2,995,234,595 in economic activity (transactions), \$937,839,394 in labor income and 18,064 jobs.

In addition to being excellent stewards of state resources, OPRD is also a strong partner to local park and recreation agencies, including municipalities, counties, and park and recreation districts. OPRD's Local Government Grants represent the hallmark of this partnership, enabling communities in every corner of Oregon to leverage their own limited resources to develop and even rehabilitate local park and recreation facilities and properties that benefit children, families, seniors, and residents and visitors of virtually every socio-economic category. OPRD has provided \$169.7 million in recreation grants to more than 150 communities in Oregon since 2013.

In the coming biennium, more money will be available for parks statewide due to a lottery trigger for local parks funding* – but we know that also comes with more work for OPRD employees, so we are thankful for them. The department's expertise is also a significant benefit to our park and recreation agencies. OPRD personnel have always willingly shared information and knowledge with our local

agencies, through both formal and informal educational opportunities. OPRD is an essential part of the success of local park and recreation agencies as we move forward to meet growing and differing community needs.

We encourage you continued support of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. OPRD is a vital part of what makes Oregon the remarkable place that it is, and we encourage full funding for the department as outlined in SB 5527.

Thank you for your public service.

* ORS 390.134 **State Parks and Recreation Department Fund; sources; uses; advisory committee; rules; subaccounts.** (9) If the amount transferred to the State Parks and Recreation Department Fund from the Parks Subaccount during a biennium is more than 150 percent of the amount that was transferred during the 2009-2011 biennium, the State Treasurer shall, during the next following biennium, deposit for use as described in subsection (8) of this section the amount required under subsection (8) of this section plus an amount equal to the difference between the amount deposited for use as described in subsection (8) of this section during the preceding biennium and 25 percent of the moneys transferred to the State Parks and Recreation Department Fund from the Parks Subaccount during the preceding biennium.