



Connie Soper and Dan Hillburn are advocates for connecting the Oregon Coast Trail. ZACH URNESS/SALEM STATESMAN JOURNAL

‘The kind of tourism we want more of on our coast’

Bills would give \$1M for work on Oregon Coast Trail

The backstory

The 382-mile Oregon Coast Trail is one of the state’s most beautiful hiking trails, and it has become an increasingly popular tourist destination that lures people from around the world.

OPRD to develop an action plan for closing gaps on the trail.

“Fully funding completion of the OCT would be a relatively small investment in exactly the kind of tourism we want more of on our coast,” wrote Bonnie Henderson, author of “Hiking the Oregon Coast Trail: 400 Miles from”

What the bills do

House Bill 2191 and Senate Bill 679 would appropriate \$1 million from Oregon's general fund to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for continued development of the Oregon Coast Trail.

The problem? The trail isn't completely finished. Ever since it was declared "hikeable" in 1988, there have always been gaps where hikers must get off the trail and hike along the shoulder of U.S. Highway 101. Those gaps last anywhere from a half mile to a dozen miles.

However, lawmakers and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department have increasingly prioritized closing those gaps and creating a better experience. In

Oregon Coast Trail: 400 Miles from the Columbia River to California," in testimony on the bills.

There are also issues such as landslides or the loss of tread that naturally happens with any trail, and particularly one almost 400 miles long.

This money would come from Oregon's general fund. Normally, OPRD does not get general fund dollars, but is instead funded by the Oregon Lottery,