



TO: House Housing & Homelessness Committee

FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association

DATE: February 28, 2023

RE: HB 2984 Opposition

Please consider this letter of opposition to the HB2984 System Development Charge (SDC) Provisions. While we believe commercial to residential conversion opportunities are an excellent solution to help with the housing crisis, we have significant concerns and legitimate objections to the changes to SDCs.

It is important to note that in some cities commercial development does not pay parks system development charges. Allowing conversion from commercial to residential could add hundreds of units that under HB 2984 also would not pay parks SDCs.

Park and recreation facilities are a critical part of a **healthy and thriving community**. As cities across the state increase density, Park SDCs are not an obstacle but a means to ensuring that all Oregonians have equitable access to high-quality parks, nature, trails, and recreation facilities— not just those living in certain neighborhoods or areas of a community.

In addition to improving physical and mental health, parks and greenspaces are also critical to the environmental health of cities and are important tools for mitigating the effects of climate change. Low-income communities of color have historically received even lower park investments than whiter, wealthier communities. **Inequitable park investments** have contributed to **health disparities** in communities of color, where rates of obesity, heart disease, anxiety, and depression are significantly higher.

As cities become more densely populated and the **impacts of climate change increase**, planners, elected officials, and community advocates are using parks to help address critical urban infrastructure and public health issues. City parks provide access to recreational opportunities, increase property values, spur local economies, combat crime, and protect cities from environmental impacts

Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA) is made up of more than 2,200 members – **statewide** we are city, county, special district recreation agencies as well as professionals and volunteers. Our mission is to support the recreation and park profession in Oregon through leadership, education, advocacy, and member services.

Thank you for your public service.