



March 30, 2023

House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Lewis & Tran, and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 3515 modifies the Park and Recreation District statute to allow for an additional city council governance option for cities with populations over 600,000.

Portland Parks & Recreation works to provide welcoming places, programs and services that improve community health and our environment. To provide these services, Portland's park system needs effective governance and funding options.

Park and recreation districts can be an effective governance and a stable funding option to provide critical park and recreation services, but they are limited in being an effective option for cities because a city council is not allowed to be the governing body under current Oregon law.

Under current Oregon statutes, a County Commission can be the governing body for a park and recreation district solely within a county. House Bill 3515 is modeled after a similar update that Washington legislators passed in 2002, which was then utilized by Seattle voters to create a Seattle Park District in 2014.

This proposed bill aims to expand governance options for Portland, but does not remove any existing governance options, and does not create a park and recreation special district. Because this proposed bill is not creating a special district, there are no funding implications for this bill.

We know parks and recreation services are essential to the Portland community! We support House Bill 3515 to modify the Park and Recreation District statute to allow for an additional city council governance option for cities with populations over 600,000 with the approval of the county in which the majority of the city lies if the district ballot measure includes a permanent rate for operating taxes.

Endorsed by:

Administration

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Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work, and play.

