



**Re: Letter of Support for SB 1576 with -3 Amendment**

To Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Chair Prozanski, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 1576. The Oregon Coast Visitors Association is in full support of SB 1576 with the -3 amendment, with the knowledge that there is intention to convene a work group in the interim to work out some more substantial solutions.

With the recent court ruling on recreational immunity, we are concerned that the closure of trails will shut down beach access and recreational hikers, dealing a huge blow to the tourism industry, which more than 25,290 hard-working coastal Oregonians rely on for their very livelihoods and/or employment. Already, there are 22 trails on the coast that have closed or are scheduled to close due to the current environment. We ask you to change that by passing the fixes in the -3 amendment to keep trails open this summer. Then we can get to work on a more substantial solution for the next legislative session.

The Oregon Coast Visitors Association is the Destination Management Organization charged with serving the entire Oregon Coast from the Columbia River to the California border. That's about 363 miles of coastline. We don't just market the coast for tourists, but we also provide resources, technical assistance and other services that developed new and enhanced opportunities for visitors to experience. By doing that work, we also benefit year-round coastal residents because more opportunities improve their own quality of life.

Tourism is core to the coastal economy. In 2022 the industry brought \$2.37 billion in total visitor spending to the coast and accounted for 25,290 jobs in our communities. Employees in the coastal tourism industry earned \$874.5 million. Tourism and hospitality is Oregon's largest traded sector employer, and I would go so far as to say it has an outsized impact on the coast, where we rely extremely heavily on this industry to put food on our own plates and rooves over our heads.

Those are big numbers, and it's because of our core draws for visitors – most notably our ocean beaches, hiking trails and fresh local seafood – which also are the very elements that make our coastal communities such attractive places to live. Our trails are one of our biggest assets for visitors and community enjoyment. The Oregon Coast Trail – one single trail that's composed of 10 segments – is 384 miles and passes near almost every coastal community. That's before we even start to count the hundreds of miles of trails that are used for enjoyment, accessing beaches, witnessing waterfalls and any number of other activities that lead people to love the Oregon Coast. We ask that you help to protect access to those assets for everyone by supporting the spirit and intent of recreational immunity. The -3 amendment is a necessary first step in that journey.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director

Oregon Coast Visitors Association

*OREGON COAST VISITORS ASSOCIATION*

