



SB 929: Oregon Coast Trail

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association – the Regional Destination Management Organization contracted with Travel Oregon to be the tourism stewards of the entire Oregon coast – as well as the Oregon Coast Trail Foundation, I am writing today to urge your support of SB 929.

The Oregon Coast Trail is not just a coastal, but a statewide treasure. Its 384 miles of scenic wonder bring visitors from all over the state, region, nation and world. It's a critical economic driver for our communities, as those visitors spend money with our local restaurants, lodging establishments, retail vendors and much more.

As an industry, tourism provides 25,000 jobs and brings \$2.3 billion in visitor spending to Oregon coastal communities. In many coastal communities, tourism is the number 1 industry and top overall employer providing jobs for the region's workforce. But it's not just about tourism and dollars. The Oregon Coast Trail is cherished by the local Oregonians who live and work in the nearby communities. Assets like help make the Oregon Coast an even more amazing place to live, work and play.

Even more than that, the Oregon Coast Trail in its philosophy is central to who we are as Oregonians. It is a public resource, open to everyone, for enjoyment of our coastal forests and waterfront. On Feb. 13, 1913, Governor Oswald West made our beaches public and open for all to enjoy. He did this by declaring the beaches a public highway. As a result, for a few generations now, have enjoyed the longest stretch of public beaches in the continental United States. The Oregon Coast Trail is of the same spirit, providing access to many beaches and pristine coastal shores.

More needs to be done to honor this legacy. There are areas where we need to connect or reroute segments of the trail. It's not named in this bill, but our opinion is that we need a coastwide trail planner who could handle the complex planning activities that go along with adding to or altering the current trail. We request and strongly urge that you pass SB 929 to help protect and expand our state's proud legacy that started in 1913 that we are committed to public access to our incredible coastline.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director

Oregon Coast Visitors Association