



TO: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

FROM: Don Horton, Oregon Recreation and Park Association, Legislative Committee Chair

DATE: March 25, 2021

RE: Opposition to SB 746

The Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA) is made up of more than 2,200 members, including 68 park and 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.

Because SB 746 is “relating to discrimination” we wanted to be clear...

ORPA believes:

- Access to public lands, recreation and facilities is an inherent right of all people.
- Access to the benefits of nature, open space, community activities and events, improve the quality of life that nurtures the spirit, body, and mind.
- Access to recreation and education on public lands can heal a rift between human and natural communities and can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable use of natural resources.
- Communities that limit the ability of marginalized communities to access parks and recreation services undermines the ability for all community members to prosper.
- Racism is at the root of social oppressions and deserves special attention in equity work.
- True structural change requires diversity in leadership and impactful positions.
- We must continually learn and challenge our conventional beliefs in order to evolve while also recognizing the process will be imperfect.
- We believe that removing barriers to access recreation services is paramount.

ORPA has dedicated resources and genuine efforts toward diversity, equity and inclusion including establishing a DEI Committee, providing an equity webinar series and developing BIPOC networking and listening sessions (<https://www.orpa.org/group/dei>). The mission of the DEI Committee is to enact change by recognizing diversity in our communities, building equitable systems, and providing inclusive spaces and programs.

However, we cannot support SB 746 as written because accepting cash is becoming harder and harder for park and recreation providers.

Allow us to provide just a few examples sent to me by ORPA members...

- **City of Pendleton** - In the future it would be our goal to upgrade our technology to allow our afterschool staff, who operate out of all the schools here in town, to have iPads that allow them to quickly pull up a parents' bill when they come to pick-up their child and take a payment if

necessary. It would not be practical to have cash at a remote site like that where the staff would be frequently distracted, however, but accepting card payments could be very possible. This bill would therefore prevent us from adding an additional convenience for our customers.

- **Jackson County** - With more and more vandalism and theft happening at our remote parks and boat ramps, we are seriously looking at moving towards a pay by phone system. Our steel fee boxes have been vandalized ferociously in recent years, even to the point of being cut with blow torches, that then burns all of the money inside. We have spent thousands of dollars trying to repair, only to have them destroyed within a week's time. We are in talks with a pay by phone company (ParkMobile) for some of these sites. Folks would have to use the app on their phone to pay, or they would have the option to purchase a season parking pass at one of our vendors off-site.
- **Josephine County** - Continual vandalism and theft makes collecting cash in remote locations counterproductive. We had a fee box that was just broken into within the last 12 hours – to remove and replace this fee box, including all staff time, parts and materials, will cost about \$1500.
- **Douglas County** - We currently do allow for cash for certain items, but it is becoming a burden and attractive nuisance. We have a very limited number of staff. Where we do allow for cash, it sits in a paybox for anywhere from 1 to 7 days. These boxes become vulnerable to theft and we have had several pay boxes stolen (the whole box cut from the heavy steel pole) or stolen by trying to pull money from them. We may only have \$6 in the box, but \$1,500 in damage is occurred from their attempt to steal it. Requiring cash would increase these payboxes and losses from would be thieves.

The government accounting rules I must follow do not allow for a single person to remove funds from a paybox and no volunteers are allowed to remove the funds. In short, my personnel costs are doubled for cash, just to remove it. In addition, people either want change or pay what they want, i.e. not the correct amount. This leads to additional staffing time to collect additional revenue owed by the user.

We don't make change and have little to no staff onsite to make change. This would increase my personnel cost by 10-fold to have someone onsite at all times to make change. If making change is a requirement, where will the funding come to offset my personnel costs? Charging 10x more will not work.

Elevating access to outdoor recreation in every corner of Oregon is key to achieving the well-being of residents and visitors, enhancing economic development and protecting our natural resources. But requiring acceptance of cash in all park venues is not efficient and adds to personnel costs when money could be spent on other programs.