

March 29, 2021

Representative Brad Witt, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
900 Court Street N.E., Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chairman Witt and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

This letter is submitted in support of House Bill 3281, which would make funding available for the completion of the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT). As trail advocates and stewards of the Oregon Coast, we worked with Representative David Brock Smith to introduce and support legislation requiring the completion of an Oregon Coast Trail Action Plan. This legislation (HB 3149) was signed into law in 2017, and since then we have participated in planning efforts to implement it.

As intended by the legislation, the Action Plan will identify and document gaps in the current OCT, which prevent hikers from safely completing the trail, primarily because portions of it are located on the shoulder of US Highway 101 or on other roadways not intended for pedestrian use. A completed trail will allow for the only trail in the country that traverses an entire coastline. This unique asset will promote tourism and encourage new visitors to the coast, whether for day hikes or for a through-hike from Washington to California border.

While much of the trail is located on our public beaches, other portions wind through towns, parks, or property overseen by other entities, such as land trust organizations, the National Forest Service and others.

We suggest that HB 3281 specify that, while appropriate for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to administer new funds intended to complete the OCT, such funding should be available to a range of stakeholders and project sponsors, including OPRD as well as cities, counties, tribes, private non-profit organizations and other public agencies. In fact, all of these partners will need to work together to ensure completion of the trail and should avail themselves of any potential new sources of funds.

We further suggest that any projects funded as a result of passage of HB 3281 be consistent with and in direct response to gaps identified needed to complete the OCT.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Ann Hanus, Salem Oregon  
Dan Hilburn, Sun River, Oregon  
Connie Soper, Portland, Oregon