

I fully support SB 109.

As the writer of a series of 66 interpretive panels at 24 sites along the coast of Oregon (most at state parks) I witnessed firsthand the fragility of seabird and marine mammal colonies to disturbance from drones. Consider that all Oregon's iconic coastal islands and rocks are part of the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge (the agency I wrote for) and many are within close proximity of state parks. With the increasing drone use for recreation, people are drawn to flying their drones over these islands to the detriment of up to a million nesting seabirds along the coastal islands, and to the detriment of seals and sea lions resting on beaches. I personally witnessed a drone flyer at Simpson Reef last summer. Simpson Reef is the largest haulout for marine mammals in Oregon. While it's illegal to harass marine mammals and seabirds, as long as there are no rules on drones at state parks, it makes it very difficult to enforce this law.

I agree that it's confusing for people to go to a national park with clear rules on drone use and then to a state park with none. We must have clear rules for drone use, and those must protect wildlife, wherever they might be disturbed. Along with the rules, we must have strong education programs for drone users to help them be informed on the danger of drone flying to wild animals--and to enlist them as supporters of wildlife instead. Thank you for advancing this important bill.