



TO: Joint Ways & Means Natural Resources Subcommittee
FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association
DATE: February 9, 2021
RE: Support for HB 5025

Please consider this letter of support for the Oregon Park & Recreation Department (OPRD) budget as detailed in HB 5025. OPRD has proven itself an excellent partner, leader and convener for parks and recreation agencies around our state. While COVID and wildfires has decreased funding for and access to recreation facilities, OPRD staff have been local agencies' stalwart troubleshooter, collaborator and cheerleader in a difficult time.

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.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department supports Oregon communities. Local Government Grants, Main Street, All-terrain Vehicle, and Office of Outdoor Recreation (OREC) programs help on the ground and in setting statewide strategies. OPRD provides approximately \$60 million in local support, nearly a quarter of the agency budget.

Millions of people benefit directly from their state and local park and recreation agencies in many ways—as gathering places to meet with friends and family, open spaces to exercise and reconnect with nature or as community resources where they can get a nutritious meal. We have always known that local, regional and state public parks add significant value and benefits to their communities in terms of Conservation, Health & Wellness and Social Equity. Beyond that, local, regional and state park agencies are also engines of economic activity in their communities.

Visitors to Oregon state parks in 2016 contributed \$1.1 billion to the state's economy and supported 16,000 full- and part-time jobs, according to a report released by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). Those jobs equated to a combined salary of \$550 million. OPRD's analysis of the report found that each dollar invested in the Oregon State Parks system generates \$30.50 in related economic activity. And according to a 2015 report of the National Recreation and Park Association, the impact of Oregon's local park and recreation agency spending on the state economy was \$1,913,297,026 in economic activity (transactions), \$716,303,856 in labor income and 17,015 jobs.

We encourage you continued support of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.