



TO: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association

DATE: February 11, 2021

RE: Support for HB 2171

Please consider this letter as support for HB 2171. We are incredibly pleased by the legislature's desire to increase access to outdoor recreation.

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.

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.

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.
- Power structures exist in communities that limit the ability of marginalized communities to access parks and recreation services which undermines the ability for all community members to prosper.
- Racism is at the root of social oppressions and deserves special attention in equity work. [Read our statement on anti-racism.](#)
- True structural change requires diversity in leadership and impactful positions.
- Having open and difficult conversations about the role white supremacy plays, including implicit and explicit bias, in our current structure is necessary in order to dismantle white supremacy.

- The goal of social justice work is liberation. We believe liberation is possible and can be accessible to everyone.
- We must continually learn and challenge our conventional beliefs in order to evolve while also recognizing the process will be imperfect.

HB 2171 reflects our value system and follows the recommendations from the Governor's Racial Justice Council Environmental Equity Committee to 1) establish a grant program to help benefit recreation engagement for underserved communities and enhance safe and comfortable outdoor tourism experiences, and 2) invest in the Office of Outdoor Recreation and task the Office to develop an action plan to advance access for diverse populations to state parks and trails, including increasing access for differently-abled people.

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.

We join you in support of HB 2171.