



Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy

OSU Portland Center | CORE

555 SW Morrison

Portland, OR 97204

outdooreconomy.oregonstate.edu

January 27, 2023

To: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Chair The Honorable Janelle Bynum
Vice-Chair The Honorable Lily Morgan
Vice-Chair The Honorable Daniel Nguyen
The Honorable Ed Diehl
The Honorable Lucetta Elmer
The Honorable Cyrus Javadi
The Honorable John Lively
The Honorable Virgle Osborne
The Honorable Hai Pham
The Honorable Ricki Ruiz
The Honorable Jules Walters

Re: Support of HB 2910

My name is Lee Davis, I am the Executive Director of the Oregon State University (OSU) Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy (CORE). CORE was founded in 2021 with the goal of developing practical, inclusive, and sustainable workforce development solutions for the outdoor recreation economy. CORE is a program of the Division of Extension and Engagement at OSU and is partnered with OSU-Cascades and the College of Forestry. As an R1 research university with extension services that reach deep into the heart of Oregon communities, OSU is in the perfect position to support the outdoor recreation economy while making significant impacts in rural Oregon communities.

Nationally, the outdoor recreation sector is an \$862 billion industry. Here in Oregon, outdoor recreation accounts for \$13 billion in GDP, while 1 in 11 jobs in 2020 in Oregon was related to the outdoors. There are countless opportunities for careers in the outdoor recreation industry – careers that provide a living wage with benefits that allow employees to buy homes and support their families. The challenge has been that the gaps in outdoor recreation workforce development have made career paths leading into the outdoor industry unclear and inconsistent. At CORE, we are working to change that and to lead the nation in developing pipelines for the future talent of the outdoor recreation economy.

Through research and targeted, informed program development, CORE is connecting academia with industry leaders to assess the workforce needs of the outdoor industry and develop and deliver rigorous academic programs that offer professional education and certificates in outdoor industry fields. Since its inception, CORE has also developed valuable partnerships to get this work done. CORE's partners include public land agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and Oregon State Parks, associations like the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, Outdoor Industry Association, and the Pacific Northwest Ski Area Association, and outdoor companies like REI and the VF Corporation. Through



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these partnerships, CORE is creating opportunities for Oregonians while attracting national attention and national investments.

The \$2 million in funding for CORE provided by HB 2910 creates an incredible opportunity for CORE to continue to deliver high quality workforce programs to address the skills gaps in the outdoor industry in Oregon and nationally. This investment in CORE will help Oregonians in rural communities prepare for and access good paying jobs, allowing them to stay where they live and support their communities. This is particularly important in places impacted by wildfires. The additional \$1 million in funding provided in HB 2910 will help CORE expand its work to assist rural communities impacted by wildfire. Too many rural communities in Oregon have been impacted by wildfires in the past decade, taking homes and businesses, and displacing residents. With CORE's support, these rural communities will have access to the tools they need to leverage their recreation assets and support their economic recovery.

Outdoor recreation is a primary part of why many of us live here, why so many people move here, and why we love it here. Responsible outdoor recreation is core to the very character and quality of life we enjoy in every county across our beautiful state. With funding provided by HB 2910, CORE can meet the needs of the outdoor industry while supporting rural Oregon communities and helping people from all backgrounds get new and better jobs in the outdoor recreation economy in Oregon.

We are excited for the opportunity to help Oregon's rural communities boost their outdoor recreation economies and to deliver workforce development programs to even more Oregonians across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2910.

Sincerely,

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Lee Davis - he/his

Executive Director - Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy
Oregon State University

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