

Testimony in Support of SB 679
Oregon Coast Trail
Ann Hanus
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I am testifying on behalf of the Chemeketans, the oldest outdoor club in Salem, and as an advocate for the Oregon Coast Trail. The Chemeketans have around 700 members and are hikers, climbers, cross country skiers, and canoe/kayakers.

The Oregon Coast, spanning 362 miles, ranks high as one of our state's crown jewels. Oregon is one of only three states that, by law, guarantees public access to our entire coast thanks to the Oregon Beach Bill and the vision set forth by Governors Oswald West and Tom McCall. The Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) tracks along the coastline and traverses sand beaches, forests, headlands and 28 coastal towns.

We strongly support SB 679 because it provides funding that would help to close the remaining about 40 miles in various gaps on the Oregon Coast Trail. This funding can provide not only direct funding for projects but also leverage grant funding, too.

Since the passage of HB 3149 in 2017, there has been significant planning and collaborative work on the OCT. The OCT was designated an Oregon Solutions Project which has resulted in collaborative approaches and strong support to address how to close the gaps. Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation and the Oregon Department of Transportation have conducted extensive public outreach and planning.

The Oregon Coast Trail will benefit not only avid hikers like myself, but will also attract tourists from around the world. This is different than the Pacific Crest Trail, for example, because people will have the opportunity to hike from town to town, stay at hotels, dine at local restaurants, and purchase items in stores. Speaking as a former state economist, completion of the trail will yield a huge economic boost to our coastal communities.

In summary, you have a rare opportunity to complete a legacy that will benefit many generations of Oregonians by supporting SB 679.