



Thursday, February 16, 2023

RE: Support for Senate Bill 679

Dear Chair Golden and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources:

This letter is submitted by the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) in support of Senate Bill 679, which would make funding available for the completion of the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT). OCVA has been an active participant in implementing previous legislation to develop an action plan to identify and address gaps in the trail. These gaps prevent hikers from safely completing the trail, primarily because portions of it are located on the shoulder of US Highway 101 or on other roadways not intended for pedestrian use.

OCVA recognizes that completion will create the only trail in the country that traverses an entire coastline. This unique asset will promote tourism and encourage new visitors to the coast, whether for day hikes or for a through-hike from Washington to the California border. As such, support for the Oregon Coast Trail is considered a core function of OCVA activities. Significant resources have been dedicated to improving access to information, as well as for trail maintenance along the coast.

OCVA suggests SB 679 specify that, while appropriate for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to administer new funds intended to complete the OCT, such funding should be available to a range of stakeholders and project sponsors, including OPRD as well as cities, counties, tribes, private non-profit organizations and other public agencies. In fact, all of these partners will need to work together to ensure completion of the trail and should avail themselves of any potential new sources of funds.

We further suggest that any projects funded as a result of SB 679's passage be consistent with and in direct response to identified gaps that need to be filled to complete the OCT.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director
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