



March 13, 2023

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Lewis & Tran, and Members of the Committee,

The Intertwine Alliance strongly and enthusiastically supports passage of House Bill 3515 that would modify the Park and Recreation District statute allowing for an additional city council governance option for cities with populations over 600,000.

The Intertwine Alliance is a Portland metro regional coalition that advocates for parks, trails, green space and equitable access to nature for all communities. Our 70 formal partners, and many more informal partners, are public agencies, nonprofit organizations and private businesses.

Access to clean air and water is a human right, as are green spaces so critical to physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Our region's parks and recreation providers play a critical role in delivering these highly valued necessities to our communities. Parks and recreation departments do so much with so little, and are sorely in need of more stable and effective governance and funding options. Our region's largest parks and recreation provider, the City of Portland, is no exception. The option to pursue a parks and rec special district is an important path to achieving long-term stability, one that will not just protect our invaluable existing assets but set them on a path to grow and thrive.

Under current Oregon law, a city council is not allowed to be the governing body of a park and rec district. This proposed bill aims to expand governance options for cities with populations over 600,000, but does not remove any existing governance options, and does not create a park and recreation special district. Because this proposed bill is not creating a special district, there are no funding implications for this bill.

House Bill 3515 is modeled after a similar update that Washington legislators passed in 2002, which was then utilized by Seattle voters to create a Seattle Park District in 2014.



Parks and recreation services are essential to the Portland region. As parks and recreation agencies in Portland continue their ongoing work to adequately and sustainably fund critical park services, this legislative change would make a park and recreation district a more viable tool for Portland voters to consider in the future.

We wholeheartedly encourage you to pass House Bill 3515.

Sincerely,

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