



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

725 Summer St. NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301-1271

(503) 986-0980

Fax (503) 986-0794

stateparks.oregon.gov

February 5, 2025

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB 929. Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) has no position on the bill.

This bill would add an additional \$1 million in general fund to continue development of the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT), as well as direct OPRD to dedicate up to \$1 million in funding from agency lottery revenue toward development, maintenance, or improvement of the trail.

The OCT runs the length of Oregon's 362-mile coastline from the Columbia River to the California border. Hikers cross sandy beaches, meander through forest-shaded corridors, traverse majestic headlands and pass through 28 coastal communities.

Around half of the route is on the beach, about a quarter is on trail segments that wind through state parks or public lands, and the remaining quarter is on US101, county roads or city streets. About ten percent of the trail is disconnected, inconvenient, unsafe, or inaccessible – mainly where the current route requires people to hike on the shoulder of U.S. 101 or where it interacts with county roads and local streets. Additionally, the with the dynamic weather environment and shifting geology on the coast, completed segments may be closed for repair after storms or landslides. For example, after a series of recent storms staff have cleared 121 trees and many more downed branches and debris along 24 miles of trail on the north coast.



Tillamook Head Trail

As envisioned, the Oregon Coast Trail will become a thru-hiking attraction for traditional backpackers as well as a signature trail-to-town experience that includes access to multiple public and private transportation options, a range of lodging and dining opportunities and exceptional outdoor experiences led by local guides and outfitters.

In 2017, HB 3149 directed OPRD to develop an action plan for closing gaps in the trail particularly where the trail relies on walking on Highway 101 and other roads. OPRD partnered with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), and

Oregon Solutions to develop the action plan. [The OCT Action Plan](#) outlines existing gaps along the trail and some of the considerations necessary to move forward with the potential alternatives.

As the plan outlines, addressing gaps would often require easements on private property, purchasing new properties or constructing new, safer routes along the highway right-of-way. There are also environmental and cultural impacts that would need to be considered. These types of projects cannot be accomplished by one agency alone, it will take the multijurisdictional cooperation of multiple state agencies, along with our tribal, federal, local, and non-profit partners.

If additional funding were available for the OCT, OPRD would likely look for opportunities to fund projects like:

- Building new trail segments on ODOT Right of Way for a safer route;
- Acquiring additional property needed to redirect trail to a safer route;
- Developing new trail segments;
- Hiring a limited duration OCT Project Manager;
- Updating signage to make current trail clearer; and
- Adding primitive campsites for thru-hikers.

Dedicating agency lottery funding to the Oregon Coast Trail would require other maintenance, repair, or upgrade projects within the agency be delayed or eliminated. The agency receives a constitutionally dedicated portion of the lottery, as approved by voters in 1998 and 2010, but cannot change the amounts received.