

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: Testimony for HB 2982

Dear Co-chair Helm, Co-chair Owens, and Members of the Committee,

I am the Secretary of the Oregon Ocean Paddling Society (OOPS), which is a non-profit organization founded in 1983 for the purpose of engaging in sea kayaking activities on the coastal waters, rivers, and lakes of Oregon. The organization values stewardship of the environment and paddling safety.

HB 2982 is important legislation because it will bolster efforts to protect Oregon from aquatic invasive species (AIS) and enhance funding for nonmotorized boating access and safety. AIS are extraordinarily difficult to eradicate once established and eradication efforts are not only expensive, they sometimes result in collateral environmental damage. Prevention by means such as inspection stations is by far the most cost-effective way to address this pernicious problem.

Funds from the Waterway Access Program are used to construct and improve facilities that accommodate the specific needs of paddlers. Such facilities benefit the boating community as a whole by expanding the options for access by paddlecraft and freeing up boat ramps for use by motorized vessels. For example, paddlers do not need reinforced-concrete boat ramps to launch or take out boats, nor do they need elongated parking spaces to accommodate trailers. It can take more time to launch paddlecraft from a boat ramp than it does to launch a motorboat, because paddlers often need multiple trips to carry their gear to the launch site. Thus, all boaters benefit from launch facilities for nonmotorized boats.

Furthermore, paddlers form the largest segment of boaters in Oregon and are growing in number. Safety education is a paramount concern of OOPS and the use of funds from the Waterway Access Program to expand outdoor education for novice paddlers is highly beneficial in terms of introducing persons to safe paddling.

The trivial increase in fees for Waterway Access Permits will have a disproportionate benefits to all boaters in Oregon. Therefore, I ask that you support HB 2982.

Bert Krages
Secretary, Oregon Ocean Paddling Society

