



TO: Joint Ways & Means Natural Resources Subcommittee  
FROM: Oregon Recreation & Park Association  
DATE: March 5, 2025  
RE: HB 5026

The 2,200+ agencies, professionals and volunteers making up the Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA) urge your support of HB 5026 funding the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD).

OPRD has proven itself an excellent partner, leader and convener for parks and recreation agencies around our state as well as a critical steward of our lands and opportunities for outdoor activities for all Oregonians. Truly, OPRD is a vital part of what makes Oregon the remarkable place that it is.

In 2023, the state park system had a record number of visitors, with over 52.2 million day-use visitors and 2.9 million camper nights, making it among the top 10 most visited state park systems in the United States. Beyond campgrounds, OPRD also manages Oregon's public ocean shore, scenic waterways, and bikeways.

In addition to being excellent stewards of state resources, OPRD is also a strong partner to local park and recreation agencies, including municipalities, counties, and park and recreation districts. OPRD's Local Government Grants represent the hallmark of this partnership, enabling communities in every corner of Oregon to leverage their own limited resources to develop and even rehabilitate local park and recreation facilities and properties that benefit children, families, seniors, and residents and visitors of virtually every socio-economic category. OPRD has provided \$169.7 million in recreation grants to more than 150 communities in Oregon since 2013.

Voter-approved Oregon Lottery funds are the largest source of income for OPRD along with recreation vehicle registration, day use, camping, and parking fees. While the short-term financial situation is strong, the long-term needs attention. Parks cannot continue to rely on revenue from visitors and lottery as the only sources of revenue. HB 3209 which raises recreation vehicle registration fees for the first time in more than two decades must pass. Additionally, OPRD needs more flexibility in how it operates, including passage of SB 838 which exempts the agency from procurement statutes, optimizing its ability to cost-effectively obtain goods and services in communities of operation statewide.

Millions of people benefit directly from their state and local park and recreation agencies in many ways—as gathering places to meet with friends and family, open spaces to exercise and reconnect with nature or as community resources where they can get a nutritious meal. Parks add significant value and benefits to their communities in terms of conservation, health and wellness and social equity. We encourage full funding for the department as outlined in HB 5026.