

**Testimony in Support of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Budget  
HB 5026**

March 5, 2025

Ann Hanus  
Chemeketans

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Levy and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Natural Resources,

On behalf of the Chemeketans, the largest and oldest outdoor recreation group in Salem, Oregon, with about 700 members, I am testifying in support of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) programs for bikeways, waterways and trails. These trails are used extensively by Oregonians across the state and attract many people to our state for their breathtaking beauty and recreation opportunities. They are important not only for the recreation enjoyment they bring to trail users, but also for the significant economic benefits to the state.

I have also been a strong advocate for completing the 362 mile Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) and closing the remaining about 40 miles in gaps along the trail. The OCT ranks high among our state's crown jewels, and Oregon is one of only three states that, by law, guarantees public access to our entire coast. The OCT Action Plan was mandated by the state legislature in 2017 and completed in 2023. It features a virtual road map with preferred options for closing the gaps in the trail along with the recommendation to have a centralized information hub for hikers. OPRD has primary responsibility for the OCT, but the trail also traverses through lands not within the OPRD's jurisdiction including those managed by federal, state, county, and city agencies and private landowners.

We urge the Subcommittee to support restoration of funding for the OPRD Statewide Trail Coordinator position necessary for efforts to build, maintain and enhance trails. The State Trail Coordinator is an important position that collaborates with local, tribal, and federal governments and private landowners. This position is also critical for implementing the Oregon Coast Trail Action Plan and developing the state's Signature Trails.

We also urge support for SB 929 which would provide \$1 million in much needed funding to help close the gaps on the Oregon Coast Trail. The OCT and other trails benefit not only avid hikers like Chemeketans, but also attracts tourists from around the world, thereby boosting our economy.

Oregon trails are the second most used outdoor recreation facility in Oregon after public streets and sidewalks. Oregonians and visitors extensively use the state's network of trails and according to OPRD's 2025-29 SCORP Summary Report, trail activities generate an estimated \$14.3 billion in economic value and \$945 million in health benefits for Oregonians. Supporting the Trail Coordinator Position and funding for trails is an investment that will result in significantly economic benefits statewide and enhanced wellbeing to Oregonians that recreate on these trails.

