



HB3104: Rural Community Resource Center

March 10, 2025

Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Diehl, Vice-Chair Isadore and House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business and Trade Members:

As you know, the largest city on the Oregon Coast is Coos Bay with approximately 16,000 residents. All other incorporated coastal cities are 10,000 or fewer residents, with the majority of communities being incorporated villages with small populations, relying on small staff numbers and a ton of support from volunteer residents to make things happen. Even though we are proud of the skills and are in awe of the capabilities of our coastal residents, not all communities have access to the same level of talent among their residents.

The Oregon Coast is what we call “deeply rural,” as we struggle like other rural communities to capitalize on economic opportunities, due to severe lack of capacity and therefore ability to plan, access, and manage state or federal funding, philanthropic investments, or partnerships with the private sector.

Despite the wealth of natural resources on the Oregon Coast, our communities are often not able to seize these opportunities and continue to face even greater economic decline.

We believe that a well-functioning Rural Community Resource Center, as described in HB3104, could greatly assist rural cities and counties in successfully achieving their food systems, sewer, water, housing, economic development and emergency response needs.

We are particularly interested in the concept of the Leverage Fund, which could offer communities and regions incentives for collaborative approaches to multi-sector work. Our hope is that this Fund would accelerate on-the-ground action and leverage public, private, and civic resources for such collaborations.

Please support HB3104.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director
Oregon Coast Visitors Association