

**Re: Support for SB 179**

*Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:*

I represent the Oregon Coast Visitors Association and the Coos Bay North Bend Charleston Visitor and Convention Bureau and I am writing today to urge you to pass Senate Bill 179.

In the wake of the Fields V. Newport case, cities and counties were closing, planning to close, or considering closing numerous trails up and down the coast. The prior version of this legislation, with the sunset, kept trails open and we believe removing the sunset will allow them to stay open.

These trails are a key draw for visitors who support our tourism industry on the coast. Tourism creates 25,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in visitor spending on the coast. That's our economic lifeblood in most coastal communities. Those same trails also help to make living on the coast so special for year-round residents.

In our view, this bill is not perfect. We would like to see it include opportunities for private landowners to have the same protections for opening their lands to public use. We'd also like to see the issue of intent between recreation and transportation be resolved.

But we also understand that this is a good bill that will keep our trails open, for now, so that Oregonians and visitors both can enjoy the coast's natural beauty. As a result, the Oregon Coast Visitors Association and Coos Bay North Bend Charleston Visitor and Convention Bureau urge passage of SB 179.

Sincerely,

Rick Osborn  
Blue Ridge Strategies