

**Emerson Levy**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
House District 53



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

March 13, 2025

Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today in strong support of SB 838, which would exempt the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) from the Public Contracting Code (PCC). As the Co-Chair of the Joint Ways and Means subcommittee On Natural Resource, I am overseeing the agency's budget and have heard from Director Sumption the financial burdens the department is facing. As a Legislature, we must be implementing policies that reflect our state's commitment to outdoor recreation and the preservation of natural resources.

As the committee knows, Oregon State Parks faces a budget deficit in the 2027-2029 biennium, threatening current services levels and the long-term viability of the park system. The agency can continue as normal for a maximum of two years, but they will need to start being creative with their budget, potentially at the cost of the public. Exempting OPRD will allow them to save critical funds that they can put forth in keeping their parks maintained and adequately staffed.

Central Oregon is a region reliant on our state parks and brings folks from all over the country to experience our beautiful state parks, I understand OPRD is unlike other state agencies. As a recreation leader pivotal to Oregon's tourism economy, they need the flexibility to procure goods and services in communities in which they operate. Providing this flexibility allows the state parks to deal with emergent issues in a timely manner is one necessary step to addressing the long-term financial stability of our park system.

Small businesses, many of which are in my district, have worked with state parks in the past to provide vital services to keep parks operated. For example, Kim Dobbs' small business, Bulldog Septic, pumps septic systems in many of our central Oregon parks. However, she can now only do so on an emergency basis due to changes in the procurement contracting requirements. I am confident small businesses would continue to lend their vital services if this process is simplified and accessible.

I urge the committee to support SB 838 and support OPRD's efforts to efficiently provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities to our beautiful state.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Levy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "E" being large and prominent.

Emerson Levy  
State Representative, House District 53