



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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DATE: March 21, 2017

TO: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

FROM: Jerri Bohard, Administrator
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SUBJECT: HB 3149 – Oregon Coast Trail

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 3149 directs the State Parks and Recreation Department and the Oregon Department of Transportation to develop an action plan to complete the Oregon Coast Trail. The bill directs the agencies to work with stakeholders and deliver the plan to the legislature by September 15, 2018.

DISCUSSION

The Oregon Coast Trail is a recreational trail that follows Oregon's coastline. There are gaps in the trail, requiring that those traversing the trail walk along the shoulders of US 101 in areas. ODOT supports providing safe walking and biking facilities for all users and can participate when the development of those facilities is on the state highway system.

US 101 is a high priority bicycle touring route and an official Scenic Byway as designated by the USDOT. ODOT is in the process of developing the Oregon Coast Bicycle Route Plan. The Oregon Coast Trail Action Plan may impact this current planning effort.

The bill directs the two agencies to develop an action plan to complete the trail. The action plan must identify the preferred trail option for development and a plan for maintenance and operation for these trail gap segments. It must also take into consideration existing land uses, property rights and address concerns of the public, which would require a public outreach process.

We are unclear about the level of effort required by the components of the action plan. From a planning and engineering perspective, it would appear to require the development of specific projects to arrive at specific options for the route of the trail and determining the impact to adjacent landowners. This would require some level of preliminary engineering and design work to identify feasible options, which would require exploring potential environmental permits and other activities necessary to meet NEPA requirements. The level of effort that seems to be required in the bill and the expedited timeline would require the agencies to hire a consultant to complete the work. ODOT does not have the staff resources internally to devote to this level of effort.

The bill also establishes an Oregon Coast Trail Fund to develop and implement the plan, but does not identify any dollars to go into the fund for these efforts. State highway funds cannot be

used for facilities developed outside of the highway right of way. This may not be the highest priority need for using state highway funds on US 101.

SUMMARY

HB 3149 directs Parks and ODOT to undertake a significant effort to create an action plan to complete the Oregon Coast Trail in a very short timeframe. No funding is identified to complete the action plan; state highway funds can only be used for segments on highway right of way.