



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Parks and Recreation Department

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**Testimony of  
David Stipe, Manager, Planning + Design  
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department  
On House Bill 3149  
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
March 21, 2017**

Members of the committee:

The Oregon Parks and Recreation manages a wide variety of recreational opportunities throughout Oregon. Consistently through the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Oregonians identify trail opportunities as one of the most popular recreation activities. The demand for both close to home and destination hiking opportunities continues to grow. Oregon is fortunate to have an incredible number of long trail opportunities: The Pacific Crest Trail, The Banks Vernonia, The Crown Zellerbach, the OC&E trail, just to name a few.

One of the most spectacular trail opportunities is the OCT. The concept of a trail running the length of the Oregon Coast was first outlined in Dr. Samuel N. Dicken's 1959 book 'Old Oregon'. Public Support grew in subsequent years and the concept of the trail moved a step closer to realization with the 1971 Recreational Trails Act. At that time, Oregon Parks and Recreation started developing section of the trail within existing state parks. By 1988, a large enough portion of the trail had been established that it was considered hikable by trail enthusiasts.

In 2011, OPRD in conjunction with local, state, and federal stakeholders developed an analysis of the OCT to suggest alternatives for improving connections on the Oregon Coast Trail in sections that are not on Oregon State Park owned or managed properties. It is important to note that the OCT is used primarily by day hikers who visit the larger contiguous sections of trail to experience the beauty of the Oregon Coast. There are a number of hikers who hike the entire trail over a 20-40 day period. The 31 gaps are places where better alignments might be possible through federal lands, improvements on highway 101, or other improvements through local communities, sometime involving the use of private property.

Simply put the easy work has been completed, and OPRD continues to work to ensure that the sections of trail in State Parks or along the Ocean Shore can be managed with better signage and trail improvements. Since 2011 OPRD has been working with interested parties who have a passion for the trail in order to try to find ways to close those gaps. However, those gaps impact more than just the trail. Significant alterations to highway 101, federal approval, and private property use must be secured to finally close the gaps.

To accomplish that task in one fell swoop will necessitate a robust planning process and detailed land use analysis, along with s construction designs and specifications. Engineering design for the project will likely include bridge design or bridge retrofit, geotechnical analysis and extensive natural and cultural resource assessment. OPRD is ready to assist in this effort, but it will require funding and a re-ordering of priorities to accomplish. If directed the agency will work diligently to meet the ambitious two year timeline proposed in this bill. Ultimately the success of the project will depend on the willingness of other land owners in cooperation with other State and Federal agencies outside of OPRD. The Department has no position on this bill.

