



November 16, 2020

Subject: Surfrider Foundation Comments related to Request to open rulemaking- Vehicle Restrictions on Ocean Shore in Tillamook County (736-024-0015)

Dear Oregon Parks and Recreation Commissioners:

The Surfrider Foundation is an environmental nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves and beaches for all people, through a powerful activist network. We have chapters in Portland, the North Coast, South Tillamook County (Three Capes Organizing Committee), Newport, Florence (Siuslaw Chapter), and Coos Bay. Our members live, work, visit, and recreate on Oregon's coastal beaches and value these special places for exploration, research and enjoyment. Our membership and Oregonians at large are impacted by management decisions made by the Commission.

Surfrider recognizes coastal recreation is critical to Oregonians' way of life and coastal economies; and, that those activities must be appropriately managed to balance the preservation and stewardship of these important resources. We also view beach access as a universal right and necessary for the public's enjoyment of the beach.

Last month we expressed support for Tillamook County requesting to initiate the rulemaking process for vehicle restrictions on the ocean shore in Tillamook County; however, we did so without knowing the Tillamook County Commission had recently approved increased fees for parking and boat launches in the Pacific City area. We are very concerned that the combined impact of fees and closing free parking on the beach will have on beach access, especially for low income families.

The 2019-2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)<sup>1</sup> identifies five demographic and societal changes that must be addressed – one of which is underserved low-income populations. The Plan outlines several strategies for increasing outdoor area use by low-income populations – one of which is providing more free opportunities, not taking them away. It also underscores the importance of beach recreation. According to a supplemental report in the SCORP, the economic value of ocean beach activities in Tillamook County is \$62.7 million<sup>2</sup> – more than any other outdoor recreation activity.

The \$10 parking fee combined with no free parking on the beach creates an exclusive beach access for families and individuals that can afford the leisure expenses. Exclusive use is not

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PRP/Documents/SCORP-2019-2023-Final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PRP/Documents/SCORP-2018-Total-Net-Economic-Value.pdf>

consistent with the spirit of Oregon's Beach Bill, Oregon's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, nor OPRD's efforts to be more inclusive and engage more diverse audiences.

The statewide rulemaking process must take into careful consideration adjacent management regulations and how a new vehicle closure would impact beach access in Pacific City – particularly for low-income families. Thorough stakeholder engagement – especially with those that might be most impacted by this change – should be undertaken as part of the process. Finally, we ask that the Commission work with Tillamook County to find a solution to beach access in Pacific City that will not create exclusive use only for those who can afford the parking fee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Briana D Goodwin". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Briana" and last name "Goodwin" clearly legible.

Bri Goodwin  
Oregon Field Manager  
Surfrider Foundation  
bgoodwin@surfrider.org  
541-655-0236