

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

September 10, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Re: Support for the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation and the *Governor's Task Force on the Outdoors: 2020 Framework for Action*

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the human-powered outdoor recreation community, we write to express our gratitude for the work of Cailin O'Brien-Feeney and the Task Force on the Outdoors as embodied in the *Task Force on the Outdoors: 2020 Framework for Action*.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

With the myriad and unprecedented challenges facing our country and the state, outdoor recreation might not immediately appear an issue of the highest priority. To the contrary, however, recent events have in many ways illuminated how essential it is that the state maintain these crucial investments, including the capacity of the Office of Outdoor Recreation to lead these efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting unprecedented challenges to Oregonians' ability to maintain their health and economic survival. During these difficult and highly uncertain times, a profoundly important source of comfort and reprieve for many people is the opportunity to go outside to local, state, and federal public lands. At the same time, the pandemic has illuminated the degree to which too



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many Oregonians and too many Americans lack ready access to these opportunities. There is great potential in leveraging efforts to address this need for improved recreation opportunities to help reduce inequity, improve quality of life, and spur the economic investment that will benefit communities across Oregon for many years to come.

As you wrote in directing the development of the *Framework for Action* report, “Elevating outdoor recreation every corner of Oregon is key to achieving the state’s ambition to provide for the well-being of its residents, economic development, and protection of resources that sustain our livelihoods.” We could not agree more, and feel that these investments make more sense now—and are more urgent—than ever.

We support the report’s identification of five key strategies to meet the goals of supporting economic development in rural and urban areas; balancing recreation access with resource protection; and increasing participation, particularly for youth and underserved communities. Further, among the identified actions which we most enthusiastically support are:

- Building capacity to increase civic engagement in recreation planning (under, “Center efforts on equity, diversity, and inclusion”);
- Engaging with “one voice” on federal outdoor recreation plans and legislation (under, “Strengthen collaboration and organizational effectiveness”);
- Proposing new, dedicated funding for recreation projects and maintenance (under, “Accelerate investments in the outdoor recreation sector”);
- Conducting a statewide outdoor recreation inventory and gap analysis (under, “Empower local and statewide action”);
- Affirming the connection between health, wellness, and the outdoors (under, “Empower local and statewide action”);
- Developing a statewide PreK-12 outdoor education plan (under, “Empower local and statewide action”);
- Promoting a culture of responsible recreation (under, “Empower local and statewide action”); and
- Piloting “Recreation Zone” land management with communities (under, “Empower local and statewide action”).



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In all, the report is an impressive piece of work, highlighting the exciting opportunities to improve the quality of life of all Oregonians.

The outdoor recreation community was deeply discouraged earlier this summer by the news of the loss of funding for the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation. While we are pleased that a short-term solution was reached, we believe it essential that the state make a long-term commitment to stable funding for this important work. We request that you do everything in your power to ensure that a solution is identified and implemented so that this incredibly beneficial work can continue.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Executive Director, Outdoor Alliance
Chris Winter, Executive Director, Access Fund
Beth Spilman, Interim Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Kent McNeill, CEO, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Todd Walton, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Mitsu Iwasaki, Chief Executive Officer, American Alpine Club
Sarah Bradham, Interim Executive Director, the Mazamas
Keegan Young, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club
Chad Nelson, Chief Executive Officer, Surfrider Foundation

