

May 5, 1967

Honorable Paul Hanneman
House of Representatives
Salem, Oregon

Dear Paul:

I appreciate your writing me concerning House Bill 1601 and I am enclosing my letter to Representative Bazett on the subject.

Naturally you feel your position is correct--but I am equally confident that mine is both right and very much in the public interest. I do hope that the committee gets the bill to the floor even if it comes out with no recommendation. The question involved is dear to the hearts of nearly every Oregonian and the issue must be resolved in a manner that furthers the traditional Oregon concept of public ownership of the beaches.

Sincerely,

Governor

TM:w

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STATE OF OREGON
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SALEM

May 5, 1967

Honorable Tom McCall
Governor
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

Dear Tom:

Although House Bill 1601 has been amended to remove some specific language, its essential function is to provide that the State Highway Commission be empowered to bring suit against beach-front property owners where prescription rights are thought to exist. As a member of the House Highway Committee, my objections are outlined below.

(1) The bill allows for no compensation to property owners who had originally been issued a title to their land by title insurance, and who have been paying taxes on that land.

(2) The natural vegetation line is not definable in many areas.

(3) Oregon has about 320 miles of coastline. ^{ms} Almost half of those miles are in permanent public ownership and are reserved for permanent public use. Only about 150 miles are in private ownership, and this remainder is decreasing. In my opinion, no other state in the nation has offered such a large proportion of its beach frontage for public use. The trend is clearly toward increased public ownership.

(4) The state has embarked upon a program of providing beach access points spaced on the average of 3 miles apart along the coast. Although the program is removing more of the remaining private frontage from the tax rolls, it will insure that scarcely a foot of sand will be excluded from public access.

(5) Because many beach frontage areas are unstable, sandy, and eroding areas, and because of vacation use only by many ocean-front owners, it is impossible for the owners to prevent public usage of their property. Hence the Highway Commission could claim widespread prescription rights. HB 1601 promotes the concept of prescription of this type of property without compensation.

This matter should be studied by a Highway Interim Committee. The concept in HB 1601 has not had previous study by the elected representatives of the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Paul Hanneman

PAH/s

cc Glen Jackson
Forrest Cooper

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