



TOM McCALL
GOVERNOR

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STATE CAPITOL
SALEM 97310

May 4, 1967

Honorable Sidney Bazett, Chairman
House Highways Committee
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon

Dear Sid:

I was deeply disturbed to learn of your committee's action yesterday on House Bill 1601. We cannot afford to ignore our responsibilities to the public of this state for protecting the dry sands from the encroachment of crass commercialism. I strongly urge that your committee reconsider House Bill 1601 and recommend it to the floor with a do-pass.

It is my understanding that following several public hearings on this bill, it was drastically amended for the purpose of removing those sections objectionable to the majority of the committee members. It is my opinion that Engrossed House Bill 1601 represents nothing more than a reaffirmation of previous legislative policy of long standing, with additional authority granted the Highway Commission to protect whatever public rights to the non-public sections of the beach which might have been developed over the years.

The bill has been misrepresented as a land grab by the state or usurpation of private property owners' inherent rights. Nothing could be further from the truth. Should the public have by long use developed some legal rights to the dry sand portions of the beach, the validity of such rights must obviously be determined in a court of law on an individual basis. The bill merely authorizes the Highway Commission to protect for the public whatever rights may have been evolved.

As a state, we have been most proud of our traditional concern for public beaches. Oregon is recognized throughout the nation as one of the few far-sighted states with the vision to preserve their beaches for public use. There is no doubt in my mind that, with the expected rapid development of the Oregon coast, our favorable public beach position may soon be threatened. House Bill 1601 is a reasonable tool to combat such future threats.

While it is true that there are technical complexities associated with the problem and that there is a need for additional study of this subject, I firmly believe that the passage of Engrossed House Bill 1601 as an interim protective measure is in the best interests of our citizens.

Sincerely,


Governor

TM:sc
cc: Glen Jackson
Forrest Cooper