

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS

April 9, 1997 Hearing Room E

1:00 P.M. Tapes 17

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Mark Simmons, Chair

Rep. Michael Fahey, Vice-Chair

Rep. Mike Lehman

Rep. Leslie Lewis

Rep. Jim Welsh

MEMBER EXCUSED:

STAFF PRESENT: Pat Zwick, Policy Analyst

Marjorie Taylor, Administrative Support

MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD: Informational Hearing - State Park Funding Options

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

Tape/#	Speaker	Comments
TAPE 17, A		
003	Chair Simmons	Calls the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. Comments on changes in agenda.
014	Bob Meinen	Director, Oregon State Parks and Recreation. There has been frustration from the committee regarding the lack of solutions and the perception of negativity on the side of Parks. From the perspective of Parks, we are trying to approach things from the standpoint of looking at the size of the problem. Private joint ventures and working with local government and dealing with new ideas are in general good ideas, but we are dealing with a problem which has accrued over time. It comes from the lack of financial resources sustained over time. Parks is \$107 million behind in just the area of renovation of existing facilities. The numbers are large in relation to the system, but it represents the worse 1/3 of the system. If this first 1/3 can be addressed, then have a sustained funding source, Parks should be able to stay ahead of future needs. Before discussing funding options the size of the

		problems need to be kept in perspective. \$107 million divided over a 10 year time period would require a minimum investment of \$10 - \$11 million per year.
057	Rep. Simmons	Appreciates the magnitude of the problem, but there needs to be discussion on how long this problem has been brewing, and where have funds gone that could have been used to address this over the last 10 years.
066	Meinen	Can provide more details on cash flow for the last decade and the type of investments which have been made.
071	Meinen	The state parks system was initiated in the 1920's, and through the CCC (Conservation Corps) there was a quite a bit of parks development. Silver Falls State Park was built by the Conservation Corps.
079	Meinen	With the help of the gas tax, major development was made during the 1950's and 1960's. The federal Land Water Conservation Program was a 50% shared program for the development of parks. The money was shared with local governments on a grant basis, plus funds were utilized by Parks to build many of the state parks which exist today. Those funds were matched with gas tax dollars. These are many of the parks which are reaching the 35 year mark.
090	Meinen	In the 1980's, constitutional amendments took both State Police and State Parks out of the gas tax, and moved those programs to the General Fund. The General Fund was never appropriated at the same level as the gas tax. Consequently, a major share of the total budget went for ongoing operations of the system, such as keeping them open and basic maintenance. The funding was not available for the actual replacement and upgrading of electrical, structural, and sewer systems over and above the operational dollars.
101	Meinen	Can provide an overview of this and also show how a combination of inflation and increasing of costs eroded some of the budgets.
106	Rep. Simmons	Asks that Mr. Meinen discuss proposals which address these options.
108	Meinen	Submits and reviews funding options. (EXHIBIT A)
117	Meinen	Review - current legislation
127	Meinen	Compliments the Legislature for the amount of ideas which have come forward this session for attempting to address some of the funding problems.
134	Meinen	Review - Bottle Tax
147	Meinen	Review - Lottery Funds
154	Meinen	Review - SB 1022 (1997 Session)
161	Meinen	Review - User Fees
166	Meinen	Review - Options and Needs
182	Meinen	Review - Recommendations for Permit Changes
197	Meinen	Review - Lottery Bonding
206	Meinen	Unsure of the interest in the concept of bonding, but if people object to this idea, then the dedication of lottery funds could be considered.
219	Meinen	Asked for the consideration of a \$0.01 per bottle concept. Senate Parks had been

		discussing unclaimed bottle deposits. Not a tax increase.
227	Meinen	Most of the transportation related funding sources require constitutional amendments. When the Senate Parks Committee considered some of these options, felt that constitutional amendments were not feasible. However, there is one proposal that the committee may want to consider and that is recreational vehicle gas tax. This would require constitutional amendment, but is not a tax increase. It would be the redistribution of recreational vehicle taxes.
239	Rep. Simmons	Comments on limited time available for this afternoon.
242	Rep. Lewis	Asks if Mr. Meinen could assemble another set of proposals which would show how money could be saved, use privatization and sponsorships, and other ideas other than new sources of taxes.
251	Rep. Lehman	Comments on concerns regarding transportation funding plan. Any increase in registration fees or any gas tax as a means to fund Parks, will be very difficult.
264	Rep. Fahey	Comments on concerns regarding long term funding.
268	Rep. Simmons	Adjourns meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Transcribed By, Reviewed By,

Rebecca M. Scott, Pat Zwick,

Administrative Support Policy Analyst

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

A - Oregon State Parks, Written Testimony, Bob Meinen, 6 pp.