

JOINT MEETING OF THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS
AND THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS

April 30, 1997 Hearing Room E

2:00 P.M. Tapes 20 - 21

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Mark Simmons, Chair

Rep. Michael Fahey, Vice-Chair

Rep. Mike Lehman

Rep. Leslie Lewis

Rep. Jim Welsh

Sen. Gary George, Chair

Sen. Verne Duncan

MEMBER EXCUSED: Sen. Bill Dwyer, Vice-Chair

Sen. Joan Dukes

Sen. Veral Tarno

STAFF PRESENT:

Pat Zwick, Policy Analyst

Glen Stonebrink, Committee Administrator

Marjorie Taylor, Administrative Support

MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD:

Parks Informational Meeting

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 20, A		
003	Chair Simmons	Calls the meeting to order at 2:42 p.m. and opens the parks informational meeting.
007	Rep. Watt	State Representative, District 50. Speaks of a partnership existing between the Parks Department and the Department of Corrections. States that the Parks Department has used prison labor for over 20 years. Explains that the Parks Department and the Department of Corrections would benefit from "behind the wall" projects such as prisoners creating prefabricated structures.
037	Larry Niswender	Budget Analyst, Legislative Fiscal Office. Indicates that \$2.7 million has been identified for use from the Department of Corrections. Explains that the goal of the partnership is to maximize resources (EXHIBIT A) .
053	Rep. Lehman	Asks how it can be rationalized to take jobs away from private enterprise and send them to the prison system.
056	Rep. Watt	Agrees that the question needs to be discussed. States that Oregonians recently voted to have prisoners work while they are in the system. Indicates that a decision needs to be made about how the will of the people needs to balance against how it impacts the private sector.
070	Rep. Welsh	Agrees that it is difficult to balance inmate work programs with the private sector. States that he will not support inmate programs that would take good jobs away from the private sector.
086	Rep. Simmons	Asks if there are concerns about material supply.
088	Niswender	Indicates that there is a possible alternative funding source.
108	Chair Simmons	States that the legislature is investigating ways of expanding the partnership between the Parks Department and the Department of Transportation.
117	Bob Meinen	Director, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department. Indicates that the Department of Transportation will discuss the existing contract between Parks and Transportation.
125	Grace Crunican	Director, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Explains the separation of Parks from Transportation. The relationship between the agencies has been cordial but they are separate agencies now. Explains what financial and service partnerships exist between the agencies (EXHIBIT B) .
177	Sen. Duncan	Asks about finances between Parks and ODOT.
180	Crunican	Provides information about the changing financial relationship.
183	Meinen	Agrees that the relationship between Parks and ODOT has been cordial and productive. Indicates that ODOT can't assist with the renovation and rehabilitation of the parks. Explains that many parks locations also serve as safety waysides for travelers.

217	Chair Simmons	Asks if there is a reason why ODOT does not pave roads in the State Parks.
225	Meinen	Provides an example of Ft. Stevens State Park where there are two different property ownerships. The roads in poor shape are under Parks Department control and another road is under county control. Indicates that priorities are established to make efficient use of time and resources.
254	Chair Simmons	Asks if the Parks Department contracts with ODOT to take care of the roads.
257	Meinen	Indicates that road work done in the state parks is completed by ODOT
265	Cruncan	Indicates that all of the construction work in the state is contracted out. The only legal restriction on ODOT is that they must pave public roads, which the parks roads are.
287	Meinen	Explains that most contracts related to the parks would be \$100,000-\$150,000.
292	Chair Simmons	Verifies that once a toll is charged, any road beyond the toll must be maintained by the Parks Department.
295	Cruncan	Answers affirmatively.
298	Rep. Fahey	Asks if any consideration has been given to fund the visitor center at Ft. Stevens.
303	Meinen	Indicates that the option of funding the visitor center has not been explored.
313	Sen. George	Asks if ODOT funds could be used to maintain waysides and rest areas that don't charge fees.
320	Cruncan	That occurs where it is legal.
340	Doug Tindle	Representative, Oregon Department of Transportation. Explains how ODOT decides on which waysides to pave, based on federal guidelines.
362	Chair Simmons	Asks if the federal guidelines require rest stops to be an hour apart.
366	Tindle	Approximately 45 minute - 1 hour between stops.
369	Chair Simmons	Verifies that the stops are on roads funded with federal money.
372	Tindle	They are guidelines, not federal standards.
378	Chair Simmons	Asks if the guidelines could be "bent".
381	Tindle	Indicates that the guidelines have been "bent" and questions have risen about ODOT's ability to defend their placement.
389	Rep. Fahey	Asks if capacity of the waysides has an effect on the guidelines for placement.
398	Tindle	Agrees that would be a reason to justify why the waysides are closer.
404	Rep. Lehman	Asks if ODOT has plenty of funds that can be shared with the Parks Department.
TAPE 21, A		

003	Crunican	Indicates that the roads are maintained for whatever uses are needed. ODOT is concerned about staying efficient and effective. The federal guidelines help ODOT to stay efficient. Expresses sympathy for the Parks Department and the State Police.
024	Crunican	ODOT is a partner in the state's economy and they must aid in the development when they can. The Parks Department is more broke than ODOT, but the goal is to get a good return on taxpayer dollars.
031	Chair Simmons	Explains that the parks are in dire straits and the goal is to find any funding solution possible. Indicates that anyone that can provide assistance will have financial backing.
039	Crunican	States that ODOT is trying to be a good state partner, but they haven't seen any money come into the agency.
045	Rep. Lehman	Verifies that if ODOT got money to spend on parks, those projects would be tradeoffs for other highway projects.
048	Crunican	Indicates that there are competing needs in parks and through the road system.
051	Chair Simmons	Explains that a dedicated funding source needs to be found.
058	Sen. George	Discusses SB 1022 which would allow ODOT to charge fees for records at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Funds would allow for ODOT to participate in parks activities, such as improving handicapped access or transferring ODOT surplus properties.
089	Crunican	Asks for clarification on the intent for surplus ODOT properties.
091	Sen. George	Funds would be in the account that ODOT could use for parks.
093	Crunican	Explains that any money received from surplus property needs to remain part of the highway fund.
095	Sen. George	Indicates that SB 925 transferred ownership of properties purchased before 1980.
097	Tindle	Indicates that the intention of SB 925 was to allow transfer of ODOT properties to parks. There is a dispute in the Attorney General's office on the constitutionality of the bill. If the property was purchased with highway fund money there must be compensation back to the highway fund.
116	Sen. George	Asks for a method of transferring funds that would be more constitutionally correct.
125	Crunican	Clarifies that funds generated by a records fee would be dedicated to the highway fund.
135	Tindle	The issue at hand needs to be answered by legal counsel.
138	Crunican	Indicates that ODOT is considering capital improvements that need to be made to highway rest areas.
153	Sen. George	Indicates that the constitutional wording is such that the funds could be used for roadside rest areas.
162	Crunican	Explains that ODOT has taken roadside rest areas to the max.

178	Sen. George	Asks what the ODOT reaction is to creating a fund from records fees.
188	Crunican	The attorneys need to clarify the distinction between a road fee and a public records fee.
200	Sen. George	Explains how records fees would be raised to ensure that ODOT would come out even, and create a surplus fund.
213	Crunican	States that she doesn't have a problem with gaining profit from public records. If approval is gained for use of the funds, then they should be used for parks.
250	Chair Simmons	Indicates that questions from the committee were submitted to Mr. Meinen. He has returned with answers (EXHIBIT C).
251	Meinen	Asks the Department of Corrections be allowed to present information about their relationship with the Parks Department (EXHIBIT D).
264	David Cook	Director, Department of Corrections. States that inmates have been working for the Parks Department for 20 years.
286	Rep. Lehman	Indicates that there is cost savings to the Parks Department to use prison labor, but wonders if it costs more to supervise prison work crews.
295	Cook	In the short term, it is more expensive to supervise work crews, but in the long term the inmates will be released and be productive.
310	Rep. Lehman	Asks if inmates that want to work are working, as compared to inmates that are required to work.
314	Cook	Indicates that there is an inmate reward program based on performance.
332	Sen. George	Asks if dangerous and non-dangerous criminals can be separated from each other.
339	Cook	Explains that the classification system in the Department of Corrections allows for all types of criminals to be mixed. Proposes that some crews be used for outside work, but other crews be used for work inside the prisons to create prefabricated structures.
363	Sen. George	Asks if there would be a large transition to an operation that creates prefabricated structures.
376	Cook	Explains that inmates' skills are built over time. Agrees that there is concern about the prisons competing with the private sector jobs.
406	Sen. George	Relates how high school drop-outs who have few skills, have been trained in construction work.
TAPE 20, B		
005	Cook	Explains that the private sector works with the Department of Corrections on the prison work programs. The goal is to put people to work and give them skills.
016	Rep. Fahey	Explains that he has toured a prison work facility and asked how many prisoners follow the trade that they are trained in. Indicates that prisoners are not tracked, employment-wise, after they leave.
027	Cook	Agrees that the tracking information isn't great.
040	Rep. Fahey	Indicates that the work program is great.

043	Cook	Explains that the new work programs will be much more business like, and the institutions will be designed around the work programs.
046	Rep. Fahey	States that the key is to have the prisoners gainfully employed when they are released from prison.
047	Sen. George	Explains the Angel Job Corps Camp which trains juvenile delinquents in various trades. Indicates that 84% of the participants go from the camp to high paying union jobs.
061	Cook	Indicates that the Job Corps has some ability to select participants, whereas the prisons must work with what they have.
074	Meinen	Indicates that he has tried to answer in writing, all of the questions asked by the committee.
093	Brian Booth	Chairman, Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission. Explains the purpose and membership of the Commission. Indicates that when the Commission was formed in 1990 to investigate the Parks Department, they found that the Parks Department was fairly cumbersome and inactive. Explains that the Department was reorganized to become a process driven, customer serving organization. Indicates that the Parks Department has been working with a flat budget, fewer employees, dramatically decreased state support, and serves millions more customers (EXHIBIT E) .
164	Booth	Indicates that the Parks Department has tried to find many other ways to cut costs, but they reached a point of needing funds from the Emergency Board. States that parks need a long-term stable funding source.
201	Chair Simmons	Asks if the public's reaction to commercialization is in protest.
204	Booth	Answers affirmatively.
205	Chair Simmons	Indicates that members of the Good Sam RV Club say that the services offered in private parks out-compete those offered in public parks.
213	Booth	Agrees that is the case. Explains that state parks should be one place to get away from commercialization.
228	Chair Lewis	Suggests that the committee continue to investigate opportunities from corporate sponsors. Expresses frustration with the Parks Department for shooting down many funding ideas. Indicates that there are very limited funds in the state budget and parks take a back seat to issues that affect peoples' everyday lives. It is appropriate to spend money on service items rather than recreation.
264	Booth	Expresses awareness of state needs, but national parks get over 90% of their funding from the federal government, whereas Oregon parks get less than 10%. Indicates that the Parks Department is being creative with their funding.
271	Chair Lewis	States that testimony has been presented about concessionaires and private groups running services in the national parks. Explains that Mr. Meinen has said that a concessionaire program won't work in the parks, but they've worked for a long time.
287	Booth	Explains that the concessionaires in the national parks have not been successful. The Parks Department has been creative with finding funding mechanisms.

306	Chair Simmons	Expresses appreciation for participation.
325	Sen. Duncan	Asks what the vision is for parks from a state standpoint.
362	Chair Simmons	Agrees that parks issues are difficult since they are so focused on state heritage. The goal is to set the parks up to succeed.
374	Rep. Fahey	Expresses appreciation for the information.
380	Booth	Indicates that state law requires that parks be created to serve the population. Similar arguments are made for prisons but not parks.
385	Chair Simmons	Adjourns the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Submitted By, Reviewed By,

Marjorie Taylor, Pat Zwick,

Administrative Support Policy Analyst

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

A - Parks Informational Meeting, Written material, Larry Niswender, 1 p.

B - Parks Informational Meeting, Written testimony, Grace Crunican, 1 p.

C - Parks Informational Meeting, Written material, Committee Staff, 2 pp.

D - Parks Informational Meeting, Written material, Bob Meinen, 32 pp.

E - Parks Informational Meeting, Written material, Brian Booth, 2 pp.