

SMOKEFREE OREGON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION

Background:

Governor Kitzhaber signed the Tobacco-free State Properties Executive Order in August 2012. Most state agencies successfully implemented the Order in January 2013.

The Order encourages the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission “to adopt policies by December 31, 2014 that limit or restrict the use of tobacco products at state parks and recreation areas to address wellness issues, and to reduce the risk of forest fires.”

The Order “in no way limits the authority of state agencies to further limit or restrict the use of tobacco products in state agency buildings or on state agency grounds.”

Proposed Rule Changes:

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) Executive Committee determined OAR changes were necessary for implementing the Order. OPRD proposed banning the use of cigarettes in all state parks.

Smokefree Community Response:

- The proposed rule changes came at the same time the Smokefree Oregon campaign was running media ads with a message about protecting the environment. The paid media and website led Surfrider Foundation and other environmental organizations to support OPRD in their smokefree parks efforts - but also to advocate for applying the same rules to public beaches.
- Local Tobacco Prevention and Education program in county health departments and tribes were activated to support OPRD and recommend expanding the rule changes to beaches. Coordinators worked with their elected officials to submit public comment, they attended public hearings and responded to community inquiries.

Outcome:

The number of supportive comments outweighed the number of opposing comments, leading the OPRD Commission to adopt rules for prohibiting smoking in state parks. Due to the overwhelming response to include beaches, the Commission approved opening up rulemaking for smokefree beaches.

