

800 NE Oregon St, Ste 730
Portland, OR 97232
Voice (971) 673-0984
Fax: (971) 673-0994
TTY (971) 673-0372

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Richard Walkoski, Recreation Program Manager
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301

Mr. Walkoski:

The Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division would first and foremost like to commend the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Executive Committee and Commission for demonstrating leadership in tobacco prevention and education by making Oregon State Parks smoke-free.

By making all Oregon state parks smoke-free, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) will improve the quality of life for all people in Oregon. Oregonians have invested significantly in our parks and recreation system, and taking the next step to go smoke-free will promote the health of our community, environment and the state's bottom line.

The Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division (PHD) is fully supportive of OPRD in establishing smoke-free state parks. PHD also encourages expansion of the rule to include other forms of tobacco, including hookah, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco, reflecting the successful model policies put forward by county governments. Currently, Oregon has 17 tobacco-free fairgrounds and 36 jurisdictions have restricted tobacco use in parks. Local governments are also establishing tobacco-free properties and creating healthier workplaces. Most recently Umatilla County has joined Benton, Clatsop, Deschutes, Hood River, and Multnomah counties in passing a tobacco-free policy for all county properties. Many of these policies are comprehensive and inclusive of electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

In addition, PHD recommends that the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission open rulemaking for Ocean Shore State Recreation Areas and simultaneously implement smoke-free ocean shores. Of the eight Oregon counties with an elevated proportion of adult cigarette smokers, four are located on the coast: Curry, Coos, Douglas and Lincoln. In each, more than one in four adults smokes cigarettes. Providing smoke-free state parks, inclusive of Oregon's beaches, will make a difference for Oregonians that are disproportionately affected by tobacco.

In Oregon, tobacco use continues to be the number one cause of preventable death and illness, resulting in approximately 7,000 deaths per year. Tobacco use costs Oregon in dollars as well as lives, costing Oregon nearly 2.4 billion dollars in direct medical expenditures and lost productivity due to premature death. Smoke-free State Parks will help smokers quit, protect Oregonians from second-hand smoke, and show kids that tobacco use is not the norm.

- Three out of every four Oregon smokers want to quit, and having a tobacco-free environment helps with the difficult decision to become tobacco-free. The Surgeon General's 2000 Report on Reducing Tobacco Use found that smoke free laws "have been shown to decrease daily tobacco consumption and to increase smoking cessation among smokers."
- Second-hand smoke can be just as deadly outdoors as indoors. Recent studies show that sitting three-feet away from a smoker outdoors can expose you to the same level of secondhand smoke as if you were sitting indoors with a smoker.¹² In addition, secondhand smoke can trigger asthma attacks and other immediate adverse health effects for park users.
- Tobacco-free spaces promote a healthy lifestyle and discourage youth tobacco use initiation and future addictions.

Again, PHD thanks you for moving forward on protecting people from tobacco in Oregon. PHD houses a nationally recognized Tobacco Prevention and Education Program and is available to provide technical assistance, provide community education, and support your implementation efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.



Karen Girard, MPA

Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention Section Manager

Oregon Public Health Division

Center for Prevention & Health Promotion

¹ Wayne Ott and Neil Klepeis. Journal of the Air and Waste Management Association (JAWMA), May 2007.

² Barnoya and Glantz. Cardiovascular Effects of Secondhand Smoke: from the Center for Tobacco Control.