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Richard Walkoski, Recreation Program Manager
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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 ocean shores smoke-free.

By making all of Oregon's coastal beaches smoke-free, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) will improve the quality of life for all people in Oregon. Oregon has a rich history of preserving Oregon's beaches for public use. Since 1967, the public has had free and uninterrupted use of the beaches along Oregon's 362 mile-long coastline. OPRD has the responsibility to protect and preserve the recreation, scenic and natural resource values found on the ocean shore – by taking the step to go smoke-free OPRD is also promoting the health of our community, environment and the state's bottom line. A majority of smokers initiate smoking before the age of 18. By creating smoke-free ocean shores, OPRD is contributing to a growing list of places in Oregon that model healthful behaviors for youth and promote health for everyone.

The Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division (PHD) is fully supportive of OPRD in establishing smoke-free ocean shores. PHD also encourages expansion of the rule to include e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, reflecting the successful model policies put forward by local jurisdictions. Currently, Oregon has 17 tobacco-free fairgrounds and 45 jurisdictions have restricted tobacco use in parks. Local governments are also establishing tobacco-free properties and creating healthier workplaces. Most recently Klamath and Washington counties have joined Benton, Clatsop, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Multnomah and Umatilla counties in passing tobacco-free policies for county properties. Many of these policies are comprehensive and inclusive of electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

All seven Oregon coastal counties have higher cigarette smoking rates compared to the state average. Curry County has the highest smoking prevalence in the state - nearly one in three

adults smoke. Providing smoke-free state ocean shores 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 ocean shores 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.^{1,2} 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.

Sincerely,



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.