

FROM Robert Samuel White  
TO Governor Kotek  
Cc [Kotek Campaign Chair]; Director Lisa Sumption; Denise Warburton, OPRD; Interim Director Stefanie Coons  
DATE January 14, 2026, 6:07 PM PT  
SUBJECT **An Open Letter to Governor Kotek**  
DOCUMENT 01KEZK3DQ86AGV11TPVG7VXC6H

---

Governor Kotek,

Ten months ago, I provided comprehensive documentation of institutional abuse within Oregon State Parks' volunteer program.

Audio recordings. Video evidence. Contemporaneous emails. A complete evidentiary record of supervisory misconduct, retaliation for protected speech, and systematic targeting of a volunteer offering unpaid labor to support Oregon's public lands.

I reported this to Director Lisa Sumption with specific requests for accountability. She acknowledged receipt and deferred to "appropriate channels." No investigation occurred. No protections were implemented. No accountability was enforced.

I contacted your office multiple times. No response. Not even acknowledgment.

For ten months, both you and Director Sumption have chosen silence.

This silence is a choice. It is also evidence.

Here is what the documentation shows:

[Park Supervisor], Park Supervisor at Honeyman State Park, orchestrated systematic psychological pressure against me over two months. She weaponized manufactured trust through a subordinate who extracted confidential disclosures under false pretenses of friendship.

Those disclosures were transmitted to supervisors who used them to construct a psychological profile framing my documented concerns as pathology.

[Park Manager], Park Manager, executed that pressure through documented abuse including telling me to "chew glass and swallow it" while admitting I was "never given the benefit of the doubt."

[Volunteer Services Lead], Volunteer Services Lead, spent ninety minutes eliciting vulnerability through reciprocal disclosure, then betrayed that trust by transmitting everything to supervisors who weaponized it against me.

[Program Manager], Engagement Programs Manager, formalized my expulsion in writing, explicitly citing my protected First Amendment activity as grounds for removal.

They deployed an unidentified operative to interrogate me while I worked alone. When I documented this encounter and reported it to Director Sumption, she ignored it.

They targeted every available classification: my economic precarity, my isolation, my genuine care for the work, my trust in people who presented themselves as allies.

And yes—they targeted my identity. My supervisor told me they felt "uncomfortable" around me. Suggested I believed I had "a future" with a male colleague. Used my sexuality as one more tool to destabilize and discredit.

But I am not just a gay volunteer. I am a person who came to Oregon's coast to rebuild my life through service to public lands. I restructured everything around that commitment. I offered my labor freely. I asked only for the basic protections any volunteer deserves: safety from supervisory abuse and the right to report harm without retaliation.

Instead, I was systematically targeted, dismissed six days before my scheduled completion, and permanently expelled from all Oregon State Parks programs for documenting what was done to me.

I want to be clear about something:

This is not about my identity. This is about institutional failure to protect any volunteer—regardless of identity—from documented supervisory abuse.

But when a gay governor stays silent while a gay volunteer documents identity-based targeting by state employees, that silence has meaning.

When your office receives comprehensive evidence of retaliation for protected speech and chooses not even to acknowledge it, that choice has consequences.

When an institution charged with serving Oregon's public refuses to protect the people who volunteer to support that mission, the institution has failed its purpose.

They tried to break me.

They used my economic vulnerability. My isolation. My trust. My care for the work. My sexuality. Every available tool to destabilize, discredit, and expel me.

They failed.

I documented everything. I built a permanent public archive. I am still here—on Oregon's coast, serving as a volunteer caretaker, thriving in the life they tried to take from me.

And for ten months, your administration has been silent.

So I am asking you directly:

Does a volunteer who documented retaliation and identity-based targeting by state employees deserve an independent investigation?

Yes or no?

Not procedural language. Not deference to appropriate channels. Not silence.

An answer.

Because every day you choose silence, you choose to protect the people who caused this harm over the volunteer they targeted.

Every day Director Sumption fails to act, she confirms that Oregon State Parks will shield abusers rather than protect volunteers.

Every day this continues, the next volunteer who reports abuse knows exactly what to expect: institutional silence, retaliation for documentation, and protection of those who harm them.

This is not just about me.

This is about whether Oregon's institutions protect vulnerable people or protect themselves.

You have the evidence. You have the authority. You have had ten months.

What will you choose?

—Robert Samuel White

Former Oregon State Parks Volunteer

<https://oprdivolunteerabuse.org>