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## Port loses Sierra Club records case

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COOS BAY — The Oregon International Port of Coos Bay says it will review its public records policies, after a local judge ruled against the port in a dispute with the Sierra Club.

Coos County Circuit Court Judge Paula Bechtold ruled Monday that the port violated both Oregon law and the Sierra Club's constitutional rights, by refusing to waive fees for supplying port records to the group.

Oregon law lets public agencies charge reasonable fees for making public records available to members of the public. But agencies must waive the fees if the request for records is deemed to be in the public interest.

According to a port news release this morning, Bechtold ruled that the port must waive the fees and bear the costs of responding to the Sierra Club's request. The port says those costs will include thousands of dollars in attorney fees for reviewing the records and determining which parts might be exempt from disclosure.

Bechtold also held that the port violated the Sierra Club's constitutional rights by requesting documentation to support its request for a waiver, the news release said.

"I am particularly troubled by the court's finding that the port's handling of this matter somehow violated the Constitution," port CEO David Koch said in the news release. "That was certainly not the port's intention, and we are committed to reviewing the port's public records policies and procedures with outside legal counsel and forwarding any recommended changes to the port commission."

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