



February 27, 2019

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Chair Representative Evans, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Lewis, Representative Meek
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 2503

Chair Evans, Co-Vice Chair Lewis and Meek, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Outdoors, I write today in support of HB 2503. Oregon Outdoors (www.oregonoutdoors.org) is a recently-established and rapidly growing coalition of more than thirty outdoor recreation businesses, recreation organizations, and conservation groups committed to the preservation of Oregon's outdoor assets for future generations.

Our coalition has established legislative priorities that members have determined fit several components of Oregon's outdoor industry that are of particular importance to the coalition and represent our collective voice and long terms interests for the future of the industry in our state. These priorities include, but are not limited to: outdoor recreation access, recreation infrastructure, economic vitality, and support for responsible recreation, including support for SAR services that are often fiscally limited and required to serve both visitors and residents who participate at an increasing frequency in outdoor recreation in our state.

Our hope is that HB 2503 will provide pathway to accomplish the following outcomes, through a review, study and recommendation to make any statutory changes needed to implement agreed-upon recommendations related to SAR operations.

In regards to SAR operations, I'd like to offer several examples of the types of issues we'd like to work through together:

- Review of past search and rescue incidents as well as outdoor recreation usage data to better understand and project foreseeable future SAR needs/costs.
- Review possible funding mechanisms to cover projected needs with a focus on equitable cost recovery.
- Review of SAR policies/practices from other states that may benefit operations in Oregon.
- Identification of policies that may unintentionally hinder SAR operations and/or unnecessarily increase costs to SAR units.
- Explore opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and new technology to improve upon current practices.

Working together with OEM, the Sheriffs and other interests, we seek collaborative and innovative solutions to improve SAR and ultimately a broader array of recreational response to better serve communities who rely on these services, from highly skilled recreationists to a growing number of relatively unskilled visitors of outdoor destinations in our state.

We thank you for the opportunity to write testimony about this important issue and for your time.

Sincerely,

Hugh Morrison

Hugh Morrison
Network Coordinator - Oregon Outdoors

Oregon Outdoors Members



outdoor project



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