

Oregon Outdoors Coalition

February 4, 2021

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for House Bill 2593

Chair Evans, Vice Chairs Meek and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Outdoors Coalition, I write today in support of House Bill 2593. The Oregon Outdoors Coalition (<https://www.oregonoutdoorscoalition.org>) is a member-based organization comprised of several dozen outdoor recreation businesses, recreation advocates, and conservation groups committed to protecting and furthering Oregon's outdoor assets for all Oregonians.

The passage of HB 2593 is one of our top priorities for Oregon's 2021 legislative session. The bill would authorize the Oregon State Sheriff's Association, under the oversight of Oregon's Office of Emergency Management, to create a voluntary Search and Rescue card and a dedicated fund to support Search and Rescue needs throughout the state. The proceeds from card sales and additional outside revenue, would be used within the terms of the bill to address the Search and Rescue needs of both County Sheriffs and their volunteer first-responder partners.

This legislation represents a consensus concept and is substantively identical to House Bill 4111 from the 2020 session. HB 4111 had thirty-four sponsors comprised of members of both chambers and both parties. That legislation passed the House Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee on a unanimous vote and the House Floor 57-1. It then passed through the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee without dissent and was poised for final passage prior to the premature conclusion of the 2020 session. Parties that worked together in support of this concept include:

- Oregon State Sheriffs' Association
- Oregon Outdoors Coalition
- Volunteer First Responders
- Travel Oregon
- Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association
- Pacific Northwest Ski Area Association
- Office of Emergency Management
- Office of Outdoor Recreation

The proposal has no known opposition. In light of rapidly increasing demands for Search and Rescue services throughout the state and diminished funds for critical local government services, we urge full support and swift passage of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Erik Kancler
(On behalf of the Oregon Outdoors Coalition)