



JACKSON COUNTY

Parks

Roads and Parks Administration

Steve Lambert
Director

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February 10, 2023

Chair Prozanski
Vice Chair Thatcher
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: SB 754, Public Hearing February 15, 2023 1:00 PM

On behalf of Jackson County, I appreciate the Senate Committee on Judiciary's willingness to explore the possible release of claims associated with recreational activities that possess an inherent risk. I respectfully ask you to **support SB 754**.

Oregonians treasure their outdoors and furthermore, they cherish the time spent recreating in the natural environment. Not only does this time result in a healthier population, as shown in the recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), but the outdoor recreation economy brings valuable tourism dollars to rural communities across the state. Many, if not most of these lands are owned and administered by public agencies including small cities, counties, and special parks and recreation districts with limited resources and budgets.

With creativity, efficiency and pure dedication to helping build a healthier and more robust community, these land managers work diligently to ensure that facilities are well-maintained and safe for visitors to utilize. However, even with that effort, risk is inherent in many outdoor recreation activities, which is a motivating factor in drawing many people to the activity, whether skiing, white water rafting, kayaking, mountain biking, boating, or hiking in remote trails. Risk can be managed, but it cannot fully be eliminated in outdoor recreation. One could argue the public does not want to see all risk fully eliminated, or the activity may be less invigorating. Imagine a flat ski slope, a river rafting trip with no rapids, or a mountain bike trail that is level and paved.

For that reason, the protections granted in SB 754 are key to outdoor recreation providers in their efforts to meet the demands of Oregonians for access to the natural environment. Many small and rural providers are one lawsuit away from shuttering sites, further reducing access to the outdoors, contrary from what the public has told us they want. When stepping into the natural environment for recreation purposes users must be willing to accept a reasonable amount of risk, as outlined in the legislation and be willing to protect those entities working diligently to provide the opportunity. I firmly believe that the majority of users are prepared to do so, for the risk is what draws them to the activity to begin with.

As you consider this bill, I ask you to imagine a world without risk. Is it exciting, rewarding, engaging, and is it even possible? I am confident the majority of Oregonians would answer "no" and are willing to accept reasonable risk, rather than transferring it to the public agencies providing outdoor recreation

February 10, 2023

Page 2 of 2

services to meet demand and spur the economies of large, small, urban and rural communities. Thank you for working to address this important topic and supporting SB 754 to help us continue to deliver a high-quality outdoor recreation system for Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Lambert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Lambert
Director