



February 15, 2023

Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 754 Recreational Liability Reform

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The Central Oregon Avalanche Center is a 501c3 non-profit corporation (EIN 27-1929412) with a primary mission of providing avalanche forecasting in the Central Oregon Cascades. Unlike many other forecast centers, we currently are a fully independent community supported organization receiving no state or federal funds to provide 7-day avalanche forecasting to the Central Oregon backcountry user community.

Our support of liability reform really stems from the effects we have experienced as related to fundraising events that have been ongoing for over a decade now. As an example, our annual fundraising “Vertfest” event, a gathering of the back country community for avalanche safety clinics and a ski mountaineering race in 2023 was very close to cancellation due to the current liability environment and associated insurance premiums in Oregon. After a decade of hosting the annual event, event insurance and host requirements were like nothing we have ever seen. While we were ultimately able to produce the event, many of our longstanding local and regional business vendors could not attend due to the insurance requirements mandated.

We are an organization with no stake in for profit endeavors yet still impacted by the current liability environment in Oregon. This environment has far reaching effects beyond just for-profit business and event promoters. We teach, preach, and forecast for personal responsibility in the back country; knowing before you go, understanding risk, being prepared with the right equipment, and an understanding that one’s actions can affect the lives of others. With this in mind, we believe Oregon must establish a balanced approach to personal responsibility and business accountability like our surrounding Western States in order to allow both for profit and nonprofit entities to continue to provide the services, facilities, and activities that the residents and visitors of Oregon desire.

Sincerely,

Trevor Miller
Central Oregon Avalanche Center – President
2701 NW Scandia Loop
Bend, OR 97703
541-633-7455