



February 10, 2024

**Subject: Support for -3 Recreational Immunity Fix Amendment to SB 1576**

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee:

I'm writing to you on behalf of Central Oregon Trail Alliance (COTA), a nonprofit with a mission to develop, protect, and enhance the Central Oregon mountain bike experience through trail stewardship, advocacy, collaboration, and education.

COTA maintains 600 miles of trails and 5 bike parks that bring joy, adventure, health, and community to more than 600,000 Oregon residents and visitors. The trails and bike parks are crucial to quality of life and to the economic diversity and stability of Central Oregon.

Here's what our members say about the impact mountain biking has on their lives:

- *"Mountain biking offers me an escape from the hustle of daily life where I can feel like a kid again. It helped me conquer my fears and become a stronger person." - Petie Thom, COTA Board member, employed in Oregon's outdoor recreation industry*
- *"I was 52 years old and going through some major struggles. Then this amazing woman invited me to ride a mountain bike and I loved it. Now that amazing woman is my wife and riding partner." - Randy Winders, COTA Board member and youth mountain biking coach*
- *"Mountain biking unlocked a new level of confidence for me, and it's where I found my community! Being silly with your friends on bikes is simply the best" - Kira Sandiford, COTA staff member, employed in Oregon's outdoor recreation industry*

Outdoor recreation is key to many people's happiness, and it carries inherent risks.

Oregon's Recreational Immunity law is among the weakest in the United States, and fixing this immediately is critical. Without a strong recreational immunity law, landowners fear the very real risk of expensive lawsuits and cannot afford to keep their trails and lands open to the public.

Without access to trails and public lands, our quality of life and economy will suffer grievously.

Would Oregon even be Oregon without robust access to trails and public lands?

**Please pass SB 1576-3 with language that clearly restores recreational immunity for public and private landowners and clearly applies to both improved and unimproved trails.**

Sincerely,

Emmy Andrews  
Executive Director  
Central Oregon Trail Alliance