

Submitter: Randall Henderson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1576

ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD

2/26/2024

To: House Committee on the Judiciary

From: Randall Henderson

RE: Support for Recreational Immunity Protections through SB 1576A

Chair Kropf and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 1576A, specifically the provisions that would restore recreational immunity protections for public and private land open for recreational opportunities. This legislation is captured in the Senate Judiciary Omnibus bill, which passed the Senate 25-2 on Thursday, February 22.

I spend a significant amount of personal time volunteering for the creation and maintenance of publicly accessible trails on private land trust land in Clatsop County. I also recreate frequently on trails throughout the state, both public and private non-profit land trust property. The Oregon Public Use of Lands Act encourages public and private landowners to make their land available to the public for recreational purposes by providing landowners immunity from liability, whereas the recent Oregon Court of Appeals decision undermined the immunity guaranteed in the Act, potentially resulting in severe reduction of land available for Oregonians to enjoy. Due to the Fields vs. City of Newport, entities I'm associated with have been discussing whether it will be necessary to restrict or close some of these trails.

Both public and private entities such as land trusts are likely to face costly litigation and increased liability insurance premiums due to the decision in Fields vs. City of Newport. The passage of SB 1576A would provide important temporary safeguards so we can continue to allow public access to trails and recreational opportunities on our lands over the summer season.

Please support the passage of SB 1576A in the 2024 legislative session. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Randall Henderson
Clatsop County (near Warrenton), OR