

Submitter: Aimee Nighswonger  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB1576

Feb. 26th, 2024  
To: House Committee on the Judiciary

From: Organization Name

RE: Support for Recreational Immunity Protections through SB 1576A

Chair Kropf and Members of the Committee:

SENTENCE INTRODUCING LOCAL LAND TRUST/ORGANIZATION AND MISSION. We write to you today in support of SB 1576A, a bill 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.

As of 2023, there were 90 land trust properties open for public use in Oregon. 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.

However, a recent Oregon Court of Appeals decision undermined the immunity guaranteed in the Act, which would result in a severe reduction of land available for Oregonians to enjoy. 3-4 sentences on any popular trails/recreational opportunities your land trust/organization provides for public enjoyment. If you are writing as a member of the public, include any public/private recreational opportunities you utilize. Include any impacts from Fields vs. City of Newport so far (if your organization/Board has discussed closing trails or other public access areas).

As nonprofits, land trusts could 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  
Aimée Nighswonger