



February 4, 2025

House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE
Room 453
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 3140 Relating to recreation; declaring an emergency

Chair Nguyen and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Legislature – House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business,
and Trade:

The Travel Lane County Board of Directors is a 30-member board representing the interests of the hospitality industry in Lane County. In 2023, the board voted to support House Bill 3140 because it believes that aligning Oregon with other western states levels the playing field while continuing to provide individuals protection from grossly negligent behavior on the part of businesses. We appreciate the work of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade to develop a long-term fix through HB3140 and we fully support a long-term solution that allows Oregon's outdoor economy to thrive.

Outdoor recreation plays a significant role in Lane County's 4,700 square miles of beautiful landscapes and throughout the rest of Oregon. However, Oregon's current liability waiver standard threatens the ability of our local businesses, outdoor groups, and non-profits to provide recreation and fitness opportunities to residents and visitors.

Travel Lane County supports businesses like ski resorts, gyms, guides and outfitters, and many more who operate in the outdoor recreation sphere and beyond. Additionally, activities such as high school sports may also be affected by the out-of-balance nature of the current requirements.

Recent court rulings have effectively nullified Oregon liability waivers, impacting the accessibility and affordability of recreation and fitness for people across our state. Oregon businesses now pay significantly more for liability insurance than other western states. As a result, recreation and fitness providers are forced to either increase



consumer costs or eliminate recreation options. This will have a devastating effect on small businesses, rural communities and recreationists throughout the state. Without waiver reform, Oregon risks losing the tremendous societal and economic benefits recreation and fitness provide.

Our region hosts a large number of cycling, running, trail and sports events that require liability waivers to be signed by participants. The potential for an event not occurring increases as event expenses rise or the liability risk becomes too high for the event organizer. It would be difficult to quantify the potential number of lost room nights at this time, however, visitor experience is affected when outdoor recreation opportunities become less available or are priced so high that they become inaccessible. Should there be fewer opportunities for visitors to consider, extending a stay becomes less likely.

Our small businesses face enormous economic and, for some, environmental challenges. Having a reasonable standard for liability waivers creates a more level playing field for Oregon businesses while continuing to protect visitors from gross negligence on the part of operators who don't have the best interest of their customers as a top priority.

Travel Lane County supports and encourages the passage of House Bill 3140. Thank you for your service to Oregon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Vobora". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline for the name.

Andy Vobora
Vice President of Stakeholder Relations
Travel Lane County