

Submitter: Zack Martin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB179

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

My name is Zack Martin, and I am a resident of North Bend, Oregon. I am the chair of the Wild Coast Trails Association, formerly Wild Rivers Coast Mountain Bicycling Association. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 179, which aims to protect and promote outdoor recreational opportunities by ensuring lasting recreational immunity.

Keeping Oregon's trails open is incredibly important to our communities. These trails provide us with invaluable opportunities to connect with nature, stay active, and foster a sense of community. Through years of dedicated volunteerism around outdoor recreation advocacy, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that accessible trails have on our physical and mental well-being. Especially in rural communities like ours, having thriving recreational infrastructure encourages people to stay in our rural areas of the state, improving economic outcomes, particularly for the underrepresented parts of our county.

I support the passage of SB 179, which crucially removes the sunset clause from the current law. This is a critical step in providing lasting protections for our outdoor recreational spaces. However, I believe the bill could be further strengthened through the following amendments:

Extend Immunity to Private Landowners: Section 1 of the bill should extend the increased level of immunity to private landowners who open their land to the public free of charge. This will encourage more private landowners to make their land available for recreational use, benefiting the community as a whole.

Clarify Dual-Purpose Trails: It is important to clarify more strongly that trails serving both recreational and transportation purposes are covered under the law. Addressing the problem of subjective intent will ensure that these dual-purpose trails remain accessible to the public.

Broader Language for Activities: The bill should include broader language such as "conveyance" rather than specifically listing activities like walking, biking, and running. This will provide greater flexibility and inclusivity for various recreational activities that may not be explicitly mentioned.

I urge you to support SB 179 and consider these amendments to enhance its

effectiveness. By doing so, we can ensure that Oregon's trails remain open and accessible for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With respect,

Zack Martin

Chair, Wild Coast Trails Association

(Formerly Wild Rivers Coast Mountain Bicycling Association)

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