

Corvallis-to-the-Sea (C2C) Trail Partnership



PO Box 1562, Corvallis, OR 97339-1562 / C2CTrail.org

February 14, 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:

Chair and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

The Corvallis to Sea Trail Partnership supports House Bill 3140, which is not merely beneficial, but absolutely critical for the survival and accessibility of a valued recreational asset -- no less than one of only 15 signature trails in the state -- the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail (C2C). It stretches 60 miles between Corvallis and the Pacific, providing opportunities for hikers and cyclists alike.

The C2C Trail, a testament to community collaboration and a vital link between the Willamette Valley and the Oregon Coast, provides recreational opportunities and embodies Oregon's commitment to outdoor access. However, the very existence of this trail, which traverses a complex tapestry of private, corporate, federal, and land trust properties, could be threatened if one link in the chain is broken.

HB 3140 directly addresses the liability concerns that jeopardize the partnerships essential to the C2C's existence. Without an effective recreational immunity statute, landowners who generously allow the trail to cross their lands could face a threat of lawsuits, even in cases of ordinary negligence. Without the liability protection afforded by HB 3140, these landowners may find themselves forced to restrict or eliminate public access, effectively severing critical sections of the C2C.

The consequences of inaction are dire. Closure of the C2C would not only deprive residents and visitors of a recreational resource but could also inflict economic impacts on trail-related tourism. Furthermore, it would undermine over 20 years of collaborative effort by volunteers, organizations, and government agencies who have worked hard to create and maintain this exceptional trail.

HB 3140 offers a lifeline. By allowing operators and landowners, as defined in SECTION 1, (1)(a) of the bill, to require participants to release them from claims of ordinary negligence, this bill provides a reasonable level of protection, encouraging landowners to keep their lands open for public use. This is a pragmatic solution that recognizes the inherent risks of outdoor recreation and fosters a responsible balance between access and liability [5]. This bill appropriately protects landowners in cases of "ordinary negligence".



All fifty states in the U.S. have enacted statutes that confer some degree of liability protection to landowners who allow the general public to use their land for recreational purposes.

The time to act is now and ensure that the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail, and other invaluable recreational resources throughout Oregon, remain vibrant, accessible, and a source of pride for generations to come. This bill helps us keep our trail alive for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Louise Marquering

Louise Marquering
Acting President
Corvallis to the Sea Partnership