



Nick Gibson

Owner, Trans-Cascadia Excursions

47419 Westoak Road

Westfir, Oregon 97492

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Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nick Gibson, and I am the owner and operator of Trans-Cascadia Excursions, a mountain bike outfitter and guide company based in the Willamette National Forest. Our business relies on Oregon's vast network of trails to provide world-class outdoor experiences for residents and visitors alike. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 179, which would remove the sunset on existing recreational immunity protections and ensure lasting access to Oregon's trails.

Trails are the foundation of my business and a cornerstone of the outdoor recreation economy in our state. Beyond economic impact, trails provide invaluable health, environmental, and community benefits. As a rural business owner, I see firsthand how access to public lands strengthens local economies, supports jobs, and fosters tourism. However, uncertainty around liability has placed unnecessary strain on land managers, private landowners, and organizations working to maintain these trails. SB 179 is a necessary step to protect access and keep our state's outdoor spaces open to all.

While the bill as written is critical, I urge the committee to consider amendments to strengthen its impact:

- Extend increased immunity protections to private landowners who allow public use of their land free of charge. This will encourage more access to outdoor spaces and prevent land closures due to liability concerns.

- Clarify protections for trails that serve both recreational and transportation purposes. Many trails are used for commuting and recreation, and subjective intent should not determine liability.
- Broaden the definition of covered activities by using terms like "conveyance" rather than specifying individual activities such as walking, biking, and running. This will ensure long-term protections for all types of trail users.

Oregon's trail networks are an irreplaceable asset, both for businesses like mine and for the millions of people who explore our state's natural beauty each year. I respectfully urge you to pass SB 179 with these additional considerations to secure lasting protections for Oregon's trails, landowners, and outdoor recreation economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nick Gibson
Owner, Trans-Cascadia Excursions
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Westfir, Oregon 97492