



February 18th, 2025

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

RE: HB 3140 Relating to recreation, declaring an emergency

Chair Daniel Nguyen, Committee Members and House Leadership,

Willamette Pass Resort has been a pivotal part of Oakridge and Eugene since 1941, providing recreational and employment opportunities and a direct, positive economic impact to these communities. Willamette Pass has a long history of being a family run business, and has pioneered many “firsts,” including the state’s first six-person, high-speed detachable lift, the first snowmaking and ticketing/access systems in the Northwest, the first magic carpet lift in the state and much more. With the recent partnership with Mountain Capital Partners, we expect even more “firsts” to come. Willamette Pass has recently had a new Master Development Plan accepted by the United States Forest Service, expanding both winter and summer offerings within our Special Use Permit. It’s truly an exciting time in our resort's history, although our vision for the future is slightly diminished as we consider the deficiency in protections through the current recreational liability waiver law in Oregon. We know firsthand that all other western states enforce releases of liability. Additionally, all of the other states in which Mountain Capital Partners operates enforce release of liability. Without these critical protections we have had to make some difficult decisions and we’re still considering scaling back our recreational offerings, particularly our plan for the addition of a summer mountain bike park at Willamette Pass. During the public scoping for the Master Development Plan, the most common request was for summer recreation, including mountain biking. Our industry is focused on education, risk management, and operational best practices to provide the safest experience possible for our guests, but there is simply no way to remove the risks that are inherent to participating in these outdoor activities. Liability waivers are an effective way of providing protection for the resort and informing guests of the risks of the activity and their responsibilities for safety. The protections granted in HB 3140 would allow us to meet the demands of our communities for recreation in the Willamette National Forest. We urge the Committee to support HB 3140 and take a step forward in protecting safe and accessible recreation experiences and strengthening Oregon’s growing recreational economy.

Sincerely,
Melinda “Mindy” Ingebretson-Wolowicz
General Manager, Willamette Pass Resort