



February 18, 2025

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

**RE: SB179, Recreational Immunity Testimony**

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

On behalf of the Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD), I am writing to express the district's support for SB 179, which makes permanent the changes to recreational immunity enacted by the legislature last year.

BPRD is a special district located in Central Oregon that provides parks, trails and recreational programs to over 108,000 residents and over 1.4 million visitors each year. Access to recreational opportunities, like parks, trails and the Deschutes River, is critical to the quality of life for those who live, work, attend college, or visit the Bend area. Easily accessible recreation is also essential to supporting our local economy.

The district manages over 3,000 acres of parks and open spaces, offers 1000+ organized recreation programs and maintains over 90 miles of trails. We work daily with private landowners and other entities to connect trails, ensure access to parks, such as the Bend Whitewater Park, and maintain these important recreation spaces on behalf of the public. Without recreational immunity protections, critical trails would be disconnected, and these beloved open spaces could be closed or accessible to a privileged few rather than the broad public.

SB 179 is a welcomed update to recreational immunity, and I encourage the committee to consider the outstanding issue related to user intent of recreational amenities, particularly trails. As a public landowner and recreation facility operator, we believe that people choosing to use these amenities are recreating whether they are walking to improve their health, picking up lunch at a nearby restaurant, biking a safer route to school or work, or accessing the river for boating. The district appreciates further discussion on additional changes to address this issue and strengthen recreational immunity in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 179, and for the work done by this committee and the legislature to further strengthen recreational immunity to ensure access to public lands for the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Healy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Healy  
Executive Director

District Office

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