

Submitter: Lexie Hallahan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3140

To the Senate Committee on Judiciary,
Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 179 Pass a lasting fix to Recreational Immunity

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

For the last 21 years, my outdoor recreation program has taught more than 2,000+ people surfing, bodyboarding, and ocean science skills, in our summer event program, which typically runs from June through September along the North Oregon Coast. Our Vision and Mission for more than two decades has been to create a vibrant and sustainable women's surfing community on the Oregon Coast. Note: Since year two, we have also included families, men, boys and people of all ages in our unique event experiences, as well as our main focus of women and girls.

Having access on public state park lands and trails, to locations like Oswald West State Park (Short Sands Beach) and along the state park owned beaches at Fort Stevens State Park (Warrenton), Manzanita, Nehalem, Cannon Beach, Seaside and the Cove area, are critical for the 1000+ surfers who surf there frequently and year round. It is equally as critical for the operations of all of my summer events. I could not continue to function as a successful, local and established NW coastal business without this access.

At the end of 2023, the insurance company who I had been with for nearly 20 years dropped my event program's coverage. I hadn't had a single claim in all the time I had been with them. I was then forced to find the only company that would still insure water sport programs and pay a whopping 25% more for yearly coverage. No explanation was given why they dropped my Oregon coverage. I have a strong suspicion that it could have been the liability and immunity issues that had arisen in our state.

As a recreation operator, having all of our students/clients sign an agreement (Liability Release Waiver) to release us from claims of ordinary negligence of liability is essential. Please pass HB 3140.

Oregon needs to establish a balanced approach between personal responsibility and business accountability, similar to all other Western states.

I support and urge passing lasting recreational immunity protections to keep Oregon's trails open with SB 179. It would remove the sunset for recreational immunity protections for cities, counties and government agencies that allow public access to their land for recreational use. The bill as currently written importantly removes the sunset from the current law. I feel this is critical.

I also urge an amendment that would broaden the language of the bill, like the word "conveyance" to include more than just walking, biking, and running as forms of transportation.

Sincerely,

Lexie Hallahan
Program Director/ Owner
NW Women's Surf Camps, LLC