

Submitter: John Sorlie
On Behalf Of: Dirty Freehub - an Oregon nonprofit corporation
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB179

Testimony in support of SB 179 to extend liability protection to public and private landowners that allow free public access to their land

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee:

I am on the board of directors for the Oregon non-profit organization Dirty Freehub. The organization curates routes for cyclists to ride gravel and unimproved roads and trails in Oregon and other states. These cycling routes are scouted by members of the organization and comprehensive ride guides are written describing the routes, directions to get to the routes, and historical information about the areas the routes pass through. This information is then posted on the organization's website for the public to view and download for free. The organization has curated over 200 distinct gravel cycling routes in Oregon which cover over 8,000 miles of roads and trails. We have approximately 10,000 members in Oregon.

The cyclists that utilize the information supplied by our organization are self-sufficient and seek adventure in remote places. They are willing to assume the risks inherent in traveling off the beaten path. However, most landowners recognize that by opening up their land to these users, they are also opening themselves up to the remote possibility that if someone is injured on their property they could face claims of liability. Because of this fear of potential liability, it is not uncommon to find backroads fenced, gated, and marked with no trespassing notices. That means fewer routes for our supporters to ride, less travel to rural areas of our state where these types of rides are most prevalent, and less tourism dollars for rural Oregon.

By passing SB 179, the legislature would make clear that landowners can allow the public access to remote parts of our state without the fear of liability for doing so. This is what the vast majority of cyclists that use our organization's resources understand. Consequently, we support passage of SB 179.

Thank you,
from the Board of Directors of Dirty Freehub, an Oregon nonprofit corporation