



HB 3140: Liability Protections for Recreation Operators

Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chairs Diehl and Isadore, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association – the Regional Destination Management Organization contracted with Travel Oregon to be the tourism stewards of the entire Oregon coast – I am writing today to urge passage of HB 3140.

Access to recreational opportunities is a critical driver of tourism on the Oregon Coast – an industry that supports 25,000 jobs and brings \$2.3 billion in visitor spending in the region – and this bill will go a long way toward making coastal experiences more accessible for everyone.

I am not just a tourism professional; for years I ran a guide service near Tillamook. To offer these opportunities to experience our scenic wonders, it takes a lot of training, concern and costs. Insurance costs often force prices to be out of reach for too many would-be participants. This concern is a statewide issue.

From ski resorts in the mountains to coastal fishing outfitters, kayak guides and so many more types of recreational opportunities on the coast, operators' livelihoods hinge on sharing and opening up new worlds of recreation to people who might not be able to engage in those activities on their own. A trip fishing with a guide, or kayaking, can spark a lifelong passion that is healthy and positive. These are experiences people take with them and remember for the rest of their lives. The outdoor guide industry provides a safe means for getting started in these outdoor activities. In that way, it's also a safety issue.

Our guides on the Oregon Coast are responsible. They do their best to make sure their customers have the safest experience possible. But no matter how diligent the guide is, there are inherent risks. Those who participate must understand that. It is unfair to hold the operator liable for a sudden wave or encounter with an animal. While providing protection, negligence and misconduct still will be actionable. It's a reasonable solution to an ongoing issue in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I urge you to pass HB 3140 to make outdoor recreation more affordable and accessible for everyone.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director

Oregon Coast Visitors Association