



February 19, 2025

RE: HB 3140: Create Liability Protections for Recreation Operators

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

On behalf of the Coos Bay North Bend Charleston Visitor and Convention Bureau – the Destination Management Organization serving Oregon’s Bay Area on the South Coast – I am writing to urge passage of HB 3140 to protect outdoor recreation providers on the coast.

Oregon is one of the only states in the country that puts outdoor recreational professionals at risk of lawsuit through the inherent risks of certain activities. In our community, there are large numbers of visitors who flock to the Coast to ride ATVs and UTVs out on the dunes, or participate in a charter fishing adventure. For many of our visitors, these are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities – memories that they make with their friends and families that are cherished forever.

Lack of protection for the basic and inherent risks of these activities drives up insurance costs for the professionals who provide these services. This puts opportunities like catching an albacore tuna or Chinook salmon, or experiencing the wind and observing the wildlife and habitat provided by our local sand dunes, out of reach for too many families. It also is a deterrent to individuals entering the industry to help others have these experiences in a safe and supervised environment.

Tourism is one of the biggest economic drivers in our community, but this isn’t just about dollars and cents. It’s about safety. There’s always a risk with these activities and we’d rather have folks out there with trained and knowledgeable guides than trying to learn without understanding all the potential eventualities. When the prices are driven up by insurance rates and other factors, it’s a disincentive to using the services that keep people safe.

In cases of negligence, or disregard for safety, there still will be opportunities for legal remedy. But charter boat captains or other types of guides shouldn’t be liable for events and risks that are beyond their control.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and I urge you to pass HB 3140.

All the best,

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