

Submitter: Aaron Kuehn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB179

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

I am a hiker, trail runner, and bicycle rider who frequently enjoys the many trails that cross through private land in Oregon. These trails not only provide recreational opportunities, but they also serve as essential transportation routes for many of us. However, the fear of trail closures due to liability concerns is a real and growing issue.

Oregon Senate Bill 179 is a crucial step toward addressing this challenge. By providing an increased level of immunity for private landowners who open their property to the public free of charge, this bill encourages more landowners to share their land and keep trails open for everyone. It's essential for landowners to feel protected from potential lawsuits, and this bill ensures that they won't be penalized for allowing public access.

Additionally, the bill helps resolve the complex issue of subjective intent, and should make sure it does this correctly. Many trails are used for both recreation and transportation, and the current ambiguity regarding land use can create unnecessary confusion. SB 179 should provide clarity and ensure that the intent of both landowners and users is understood, which is a critical step in preserving the accessibility of our trails.

I strongly support Senate Bill 179 and urge legislators to pass this important measure to safeguard the future of our trails and protect those who make them accessible.