



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

I am an Oregonian who loves outdoor recreation and the Executive Director of the Central Oregon Trail Alliance (COTA), a nonprofit that improves lives through trail stewardship. As you know, the people of Central Oregon are happier and healthier because of the excellent outdoor recreation opportunities we help make possible.

I am writing to ask that you pass SB 179 to provide lasting recreational immunity protections to keep trails open in Oregon.

Outdoor recreation is inherently dangerous. Many people choose to expose themselves to risk in the outdoors to satisfy their natural human craving to challenge themselves. That opportunity keeps many people mentally and physically healthy and helps them face life's many challenges.

But without permanent and robust recreational immunity protections, the people and groups that make those experiences possible are perpetually on the brink of annihilation by an expensive lawsuit.

I constantly hear stories of how biking, running, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, and so much more have literally saved people's lives. They've gotten through grief, depression, divorce, death, illness, and come out stronger because of trails and outdoor recreation. Their children have increased their confidence, self-esteem, and resilience thanks to outdoor recreation.

But all of that good is more fragile than you might think. As we saw in *Fields v. Newport*, if recreational immunity protections are in question, Oregonians will lose access to the places, trails, and recreational opportunities that more than 80% of us use and value.

For the good of Oregonians, please pass SB 179.

Respectfully,

Emmy Andrews
Executive Director



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