



February 21, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Capitol 900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for SB-179, Recreational Immunity

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

On behalf of the City of Lake Oswego and the City Council, I am writing in support of Support SB-179 to permanently restore recreational immunity for local governments that allow the public to walk and recreate on our publicly owned properties.

As a City government, our Parks and Recreation Department manages over 600 acres of park and open space property and over 45 acres of recreation facilities. Our Department's mission is to provide excellence in building community, enriching lives, and caring for the urban and natural environment.

One crucial piece of our parks system is our 460+ acres of natural character parks, which have a woven, interconnected trail systems. In 1991, the City began the construction of a recreational loop system of pathways around the community. Each loop is designed to connect neighborhoods with schools, parks, and commercial centers. Funding for the majority of the system was provided by the bond measure approved by the voters in 1990. We have devoted substantial City funds and resources for the last 30+ years to invest in our trail system, which is at risk of closing if recreational immunity is not restored with additional protections. This would remove access to natural areas, connection to neighborhoods, and safe trails for students walking to school through our park system.

To ensure that we and many other governments can keep our trails open, we would encourage the following additions:

- Clarify more strongly that trails that serve dual purpose as both recreation and transportation facilities are covered under the law;
- Include broader language like "conveyance" rather than the specific trail activities like walking, biking, and running currently spelled out in the "includes but is not limited to" recreational activities list.

We urge your support of SB 179 to keep our community amenities open to everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,

Mayor Joe Buck