



Re: Support for SB 179: Recreational Immunity

BOARD

Daniela Brod,
Chair

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Secretary

Peg Malloy,
Treasurer

Mike Faha

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Mike Houck,
Director

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee, I am writing on behalf of the Urban Greenspaces Institute in support of SB 179, to remove the sunset on the current law and provide lasting recreational immunity protections in Oregon. At the same time, we want to share persisting concerns we and our partners have with the bill as currently written.

Concerns about liability are consistently cited in our region as barriers to developing new trail segments or opening new natural areas to the public. A strong recreational immunity law is foundational to our shared work to build a system of parks, trails and natural areas that equitably serve people across our region. Removing the sunset from the current law is crucial, and we fully support that step. We also want to highlight additional concerns we have heard from our members across the region that we hope the legislature will address.

Private landowners who have generously provided easements for off-street trail connections want to see the increased level of immunity in Section 1 of the bill extended to private landowners who open their land to the public free of charge. We have heard a strong desire from our members to more strongly clarify that trails that serve dual purpose as both recreation and transportation facilities are covered under the law and to ask the legislature to address the problem of subjective intent.

We believe broader language like "conveyance," rather than specific trail activities like "walking, biking, and running" currently spelled out in the "includes but is not limited to" recreational activities list, would make the law more evergreen as the ways people travel and recreate continue to shift and expand. We trust you share our vision for the community health, wellness and economic benefits of access to nature and recreational opportunities, and ask you to pass the strongest recreational immunity law that you're able to this session.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Houck".

Mike Houck, Director

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