

Submitter: Ann Hanus
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB179

SB 179 – Recreation Immunity
Public Hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee
April 24, 2025

Ann Hanus
Chemeketans

Chair Bynum and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 179 which would restore recreation immunity on a permanent basis to public and private landowners.

I am testifying on behalf of the Chemeketans, the oldest outdoor club in Salem, and as an advocate for the Oregon Coast Trail. The Chemeketans have around 700 members and are hikers, climbers, cross country skiers, and canoe/kayakers.

The Oregon Court of Appeals issued a ruling in 2023 that greatly impacted recreation immunity for public and private landowners who allow people to access their trails for hiking, bicycling and running. This ruling significantly impacted the liability risk faced by public and private owners who allow public access of trail. As a result, City County Insurance Services (CIS) which provides liability insurance to many Oregon local governments strongly advised local governments to close their trails to the public unless there is a legislative fix.

I appreciate that the 2024 Legislature passed a temporary fix to restore recreation immunity. Before this legislative fix was enacted, we saw that some public and private landowners closed access to popular trails. SB 179 will make that fix permanent so public and private landowners can allow access to people who want to recreate on the trails without fear of lawsuits unless there is gross negligence.

Please support SB 179 which will restore recreational immunity to public and private property owners of trails that allow public access on a permanent basis so Oregonians may continue to enjoy walking, running and bicycling on trails.