



April 22, 2025

To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: North Coast Land Conservancy
RE: Support for Recreational Immunity Protections through S.B. 179A

Chair Kropf and Committee Members:

The North Coast Land Conservancy, based in Seaside, is committed to allowing members of the community safe access to our over 4,000 acres of lands that are accessible for recreational opportunities. We write to express our strong support for S.B. 179A, a bill that would provide continued recreational immunity protections for public and private lands open for recreational use.

As of 2023, 90 land trust properties in Oregon were open for public use. The Oregon Public Use of Lands Act encourages public and private landowners to make their lands available for recreation by offering immunity from liability. However, a 2023 Oregon Court of Appeals decision undermined the protections provided by the Act, threatening Oregonians' access to these vital public and private lands.

In response, the Legislature passed S.B. 1576A during the 2024 session to temporarily restore those protections. The bill added "walking, biking, and running" to the list of covered activities and extended liability protections through January 2, 2026.

North Coast Land Conservancy manages multiple properties that support hiking, birding, hunting, and fishing. These lands offer schoolchildren and community members valuable opportunities to connect with nature. Without the protections offered by S.B. 179A, we would be forced to close public access to our lands due to liability concerns. This would not only impact NCLC, but also eliminate countless other recreational opportunities across the state that are essential to the health and well-being of our communities.

We urge you to support the passage of S.B. 179A in the 2025 legislative session.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jon Wickersham", is positioned above the printed name.

Jon Wickersham
North Coast Land Conservancy

