



**Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Shawn O'Neil Supporting SB 179:
*Legislation Maintains Public Access to Trails and Recreational Facilities***

Scheduled for public hearing on April 24, 2025, before
the House Committee On Judiciary

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallen, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of the City of Wilsonville in strong support of SB 179, which permanently restores recreational immunity for local governments that allow the public to walk and recreate on their publicly owned properties. This bill follows-up on the temporary changes of SB 1576 in 2024 for immunity for landowners who allow public use of land without charge for recreational purposes.

SB 179 adds “walking, running, and biking” to the definition of recreational purposes (ORS 105.672) and adds improved trails to the recreational immunity provided via ORS 105.688. The bill provides for local governments’ limiting of liability from ordinary negligence claims arising from the use of trails or structures on public lands. And the proposed legislation limits immunity for an improvement, design, or maintenance that was completed in a manner constituting gross negligence or reckless for which the actor is strictly liable.

Public access to trails and parks is a top priority for residents, visitors and employees of Wilsonville businesses. Wilsonville’s park system, which includes sports fields, sport courts, picnic shelters, trails and open spaces, also provides diverse recreational programming for all ages and abilities. The park system has grown by 23% over the past 12 years, from 230 acres in 2013 to 283 acres in 2025 with 18 parks, and is expected to continue to add acreage and facilities as population growth continues. METRO’s 250-acre Graham Oaks Nature Park, located adjacent to the city, features three miles of trails, which connect to the regional Ice Age Tonquin Trail.

The Oregon Public Use of Lands Act passed in 1995 with a goal of encouraging public and private owners of land to make their land available to the public for recreational purposes. The purpose of the Act was to facilitate the ability of landowners, both public and private, that made their land available without charge for recreational use by the public were not liable if a person were to be injured while using the land for recreational purposes. SB 179 continues the worthy goals of the Oregon Public Use of Lands Act.

The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on SB 179.

Mayor Shawn O'Neil, City of Wilsonville

Attachment: City of Wilsonville Parks & Recreation Brochure