



April 24, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,750 members and 8,500 businesses in Central Oregon, we appreciate the opportunity to support SB 179A. Over the summer the Bend Chamber convened a group of regional business CEOs and developed an agenda of shared priorities. Understanding the impact of outdoor recreation on our local economy, SB 179 was among the issues supported by the regional business leaders from a wide variety of sectors including healthcare, financial services, housing development, outdoor recreation, bioscience and retail.

Recreation is a critical sector of our economy in Central Oregon, as the region supports numerous large companies in addition to serving as an incubator for start-ups and local small businesses. Access to parks, trails and open space is a critical component of our recreation economy. The impacts are far reaching, as local recreation enthusiasts and visitors spent more than \$380 million in Bend alone in 2023<sup>1</sup>. This spending supported 3,470 full- and part-time jobs, making it one of our community's most vibrant industry sectors.

The Chamber supported HB 1576A in the 2024 session approving temporary changes to our state's recreational immunity statutes, and as such we support SB 179A which makes those changes permanent. Restoring a balance in recreational immunity protections on public and private land by adding "walking, biking, and running" to the list of recreational activities and extending these important safeguards by removing the sunset is critical for our community.

We see this as not only an opportunity to preserve access to our trails, open space and rivers, a hallmark of our Central Oregon, but also an economic driver for our region and the jobs it supports. We urge a yes vote on the bill and thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Sara Odendahl  
Director of Government Affairs & Strategic Initiatives  
Bend Chamber of Commerce

---

<sup>1</sup> The Economic Impact of Travel in Bend, 2023 <https://industry.visitbend.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-Dean-Runyan.pdf>