

Submitter: Jason Hattery

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1196

To the concerned parties and to our public officials:

As a career coach of 25 years in the sport of high school ski racing and a life long enjoyer of outdoor venues and sports, I am voicing support for protecting our outdoor recreation activities. I coach the sport of alpine ski racing for 5 high schools in the Metro League of the Oregon Interscholastic Ski Racing Association, as well as for Mt Hood Race Team and Academy, and Mt Hood Summer Ski Camps in the summer. The OISRA is an incredible community of over 700 families and hundreds more coaches, officials, and volunteers that come together at our state's ski areas for training and competition from November to March. Many families who play multiple sports at all levels have remarked that what we have in ski racing is the best experience these young athletes have during their high school career. It provides a unique and challenging environment to learn self-reliance, toughness, and perseverance, as well as a valuable disconnect from time spent on devices and indoors. The memories and friends they make, and the love of the outdoors and the sport becomes life-long for all, as they all come back to remark in their adult years, often creating multigenerational families in the sport.

Our organizations, both Metro and OISRA have faced increasing challenges in recent years with regards to insurance. Policy demands have ramped up, placing significantly higher costs on our non-profit members and families. Ski areas have been faced with greater tort liabilities and have become wary of activities like our sport which has run in Oregon for nearly 90 years and is now the largest interscholastic ski racing organization in the country. We must seek parity with other western states who have laws to protect outdoor recreation enterprises from liabilities regarding the inherent risks of participating in outdoor recreation. Obviously, criminal negligence is something we can all agree is wrong and must be investigated and prosecuted, but also wrong is effectively denying citizens' ability to enjoy outdoor recreation at their own risk, implied in natural environments, by making companies and organizations unable to achieve insurance or insulate themselves from careless lawsuits. The people that work in these environments are well trained, love working there, and want to provide the most reasonably safe environment they can, but the vast majority of us all understand that the tiny foot print of our operations in these vast environments cannot manage all risks, nor can we protect participants from all their decisions.

Please help all the individuals, families, employees, and volunteers who enjoy these activities, or rely upon them for their very livelihood, by supporting legislation to keep us at parity with many other states' laws regarding this issue. This truly is an issue of

protecting the good of the many over the hypothetical benefit of the extreme few, and the damage to the many if we lose these activities will be vast and irreparable.

Sincerely,
Jason Hattery