



February 4, 2026

Chair Floyd Prozanski  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the committee,

The Bend Chamber of Commerce respectfully submits this testimony in strong opposition to SB 1517.

The Bend Chamber represents a broad cross-section of Central Oregon employers, including recreation providers, health and fitness businesses, outdoor operators, tourism-related employers, nonprofits, and small family-owned enterprises. Collectively, these organizations support thousands of jobs, serve millions of recreation users and consumers, and form a cornerstone of our local and regional economy.

At its core, SB 1517 advances a fragmented and inequitable approach to liability reform by singling out specific segments of the recreation economy. Whether ski-only, outdoor-only, or otherwise limited in scope, legislation that favors some providers while excluding others is fundamentally flawed. The Bagley decision affects the entire recreation, health, and fitness industry—not just ski operators. Gyms, climbing facilities, youth sports programs, outfitters, guides, camps, wellness providers, and community nonprofits are all impacted. Any legislative response must recognize this reality and address the industry as a whole rather than arbitrarily selecting winners and losers.

Parental liability releases are a critical and longstanding tool that allow families access to recreational opportunities while enabling providers to operate responsibly and affordably. SB 1517 fails to adequately protect or clearly include parental releases, creating uncertainty for providers and families alike. This omission would restrict access to youth programs, increase costs for consumers, and expose providers, many of whom serve children and families, to unacceptable legal risk.

Rather than providing clarity, SB 1517 introduces harmful and ambiguous provisions that would increase liability exposure for ski operators and any other entities to which the bill might be applied. The lack of clear definitions, inconsistent standards, and uncertain legal outcomes makes this proposal a non-starter for the business community.

For many providers, particularly small businesses, family-owned operations, and nonprofit or NGO organizations, this level of ambiguity is not survivable. Increased insurance costs, reduced access to coverage, and heightened litigation risk would force providers to limit services or close entirely.

The Bend Chamber strongly urges the Legislature to reject SB 1517 and instead support SB 1593, the Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act of 2026. SB 1593 offers a comprehensive, balanced, and industry-wide solution that recognizes the realities of Oregon's recreation economy. It protects consumers, preserves access to recreation, provides clarity for providers, and supports affordability for families, all while addressing the impacts of the Bagley decision in a responsible and inclusive manner.

Oregon's recreation and health and fitness industry is not a niche sector—it is a major economic driver. These businesses employ thousands of Oregonians, support seasonal and year-round jobs, enhance public health, and attract visitors who fuel local economies across the state.

Importantly, many providers are small businesses, family-owned operations, and nonprofit organizations. These entities are deeply rooted in their communities and are often mission-driven, prioritizing safety, access, and consumer protection. Opposing SB 1517 is not about shielding businesses from responsibility—it is about preserving access, affordability, and choice for Oregon consumers.

For these reasons, the Bend Chamber of Commerce respectfully urges the Committee to oppose SB 1517 and advance SB 1593 as the appropriate, comprehensive solution for Oregon's recreation economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Odendahl", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sara Odendahl  
CEO  
Bend Chamber