

Submitter: Glenn Fee
On Behalf Of: Tualatin Riverkeepers
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or SB1593
Topic:

February 7, 2026

Dear Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazan, and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government-

On behalf of the board, staff, and members of Tualatin Riverkeepers (TRK), I urge passage of SB 1593. Our mission at TRK is to protect and restore the Tualatin River watershed, and it's undeniable that residents protect what they love. We help the community love the watershed by providing experiences - on the river and on the land - that connect them to this special place. In 2025 alone, we hosted more than 3,000 Oregonians on paddle trips on the Tualatin River and an additional 1,900 on volunteer habitat restoration projects. These experiences are increasingly in jeopardy, however, without liability waiver reform and we're nearing a point where it may no longer be viable from a risk perspective to lead river trips or host volunteer projects.

Like many other nonprofit outdoor and conservation organizations, we have experienced double digit percentage premium increases over the past few years. Liability waiver reform will help protect Oregon's conservation organizations and recreation providers (many being one and the same) by reducing costs, creating greater certainty for small organizations like our own, and protecting access and opportunity for recreationists and volunteers alike. Recreational liability protections enhance public safety by ensuring that outfitters, volunteer coordinators, and other trained professionals are able to operate in and continue to effectively steward the natural spaces that make our beloved state so unique.

S.B. 1593 is a critical step towards a more certain future for so many of us, and that future is also predicated on building a conservation ethos among the next generation of residents. Nearly 80% of the participants of our guided river trips (a total of 414 participants), were youth participants. Similarly, we host multiple youth groups - from Scout troops to high schools to Green Jobs programs with partners from Centro Cultural and Adelante Mujeres. To that end, we respectfully request this Committee work to amend the bill to include parent signature on behalf of a minor.

We believe that one of the best ways for Oregon residents to become advocates for our lands is to get outside to enjoy and steward our incredible natural spaces. Facilitating recreation and volunteer experiences creates opportunities for formative

adventures, empowers environmental stewardship, and develops broad community support for our work. We strongly urge the passage of SB 1593, which represents a balanced, reasonable framework that restores enforceable waivers for all recreation organizations while upholding operator responsibility.

With appreciation,

Glenn Fee
Executive Director