



Mt. Hood Ski Patrol

P.O. Box 4384
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Date: 2/8/2026

RE: Support for SB 1593
To: The Oregon Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government

Dear Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazan and the Members of the Committee,

My name is David Winterling and I'm the President of the Mt Hood Ski Patrol. We're proud of being the first ski patrol in the US, founded in 1937. Our 300 volunteers serve as first responders at all of the ski areas on Mt Hood, plus a variety of outdoor summer operations and the Portland Marathon.

Like so many Oregonians, we love and respect the outdoors. We take pride in being a strong part of the mountain community. And we experience great job satisfaction in helping to mitigate the inherent risks and hazards of snow sports, and in compassionately treating and transporting injured guests when necessary.

More than most, we are fully aware of the risks inherent in snow sports - both for ourselves and for others. I sign a liability waiver every year, and I recognize the absolute need for shared responsibility for safe behavior and decision-making. Without this our outdoor recreation industry will not survive. The Oregon Skier's Responsibility Code has been in place for many decades, for good reason.

This year, our membership is very concerned about the future of outdoor recreation in Oregon, due to our liability waiver laws. You've heard a lot of facts about this that I won't repeat. In short, Senate Bill 1593 is the right solution for Oregon, for all of our outdoor recreation providers and participants. Myself and the patrollers behind me today strongly support this bill, and not the other bill currently with the Senate Judiciary Committee.

This issue sometimes seems to be perceived as simply the trial attorneys versus the ski areas. Our volunteers are not employees of the ski areas. We, and everyone in the mountain community that I know, see this is a much bigger issue. This is about the survival of outdoor recreation in Oregon, as we know it. And about keeping outdoor recreation as accessible and affordable as possible, for everybody in Oregon.

On a separate but very much related note, I'm also the Director of the Mt Hood Museum in Government Camp. Our non-profit runs on a thin budget. We have (3) major fundraising events every year, one of which is "Ski the Glade", which is a trail-skiing event between Timberline and Government Camp, celebrating our local skiing history before chairlifts. We've hosted this popular sold-out event every year for over 20 years. For the 2025 event, our event liability insurance premium doubled, due to the liability claims environment in Oregon. This year, for the first time, our insurance carrier declined to even provide a quote. We're scrambling for options but it appears that this year's event may need to be cancelled. This is a real-world impact, this month, demonstrating how important it is for our legislature to act.

Thank you very much for your time and your service to Oregon, and please support Senate Bill 1593.

Regards,



Dave Winterling
President
Mount Hood Ski Patrol
Wy'East Region, Pacific NW Division
503 320 2071

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