

Written Testimony Important Points/Outline

RE: SB 1593 SUPPORT

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

My name is Nathan Dwyer, and I am the owner and lead guide of ROGUETROTTER Tour Co., a full-service Oregon-based guiding company that specializes in immersive, educational outdoor experiences throughout Southern Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.

I am writing to express my strong support for the Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act of 2026 (ORCA) – SB 1593.

Guiding is not just my profession; it is a vocation rooted in stewardship, education, and community connection. Since 2005, our work has focused on safely introducing visitors and Oregonians alike to our public lands, natural history, and communities. Professional guides play a critical role in outdoor recreation by increasing access, improving safety, supporting local economies, and fostering a lifelong respect for Oregon's landscapes. Our business supports local lodging, food services, transportation providers, and seasonal employment, particularly in rural areas where economic opportunities can be limited.

However, the pressures facing recreation businesses have become increasingly unsustainable. Over the past several years, insurance premiums and legal costs have risen dramatically, and many operators now face the very real possibility of being unable to secure insurance coverage at all. Without meaningful reform to Oregon's recreation liability framework, the continued operation of professionally guided outdoor experiences is at risk.

The lack of enforceable liability waivers is a central driver of these costs. When waivers cannot be relied upon, insurers increase premiums, legal exposure grows, and small businesses are forced to absorb the impact. The result is higher prices for customers, lower wages for guides, and ultimately fewer opportunities for Oregonians to access the outdoors affordably.

This issue has been steadily worsening for more than ten years, and we are now at a clear tipping point. Many long-standing, safety-focused operators are struggling to remain viable. SB 1593 is arriving at a critical moment, just in time to stabilize an industry that is essential to Oregon's economy and identity.

Most importantly, ORCA offers a simple, balanced, and proven solution. The framework proposed in this bill is already in place and working effectively in every other Western state. It aligns Oregon with neighboring states and with the federal government's longstanding approach to recreation liability. Notably, it is also consistent with what Oregon itself used to do. This legislation does not remove accountability or weaken safety standards—it restores balance, clarity, and predictability so responsible operators can continue to operate while consumers retain meaningful protections.

I also strongly support the provision calling for a comprehensive economic study to better quantify Oregon's large, sustainable, and growing outdoor recreation industry. Having accurate data will help policymakers make informed decisions that support long-term economic resilience across the state.

Thank you for your leadership and for championing SB 1593. I am deeply appreciative of your work to support Oregon's outdoor recreation community, and I am excited about the future this

bill helps protect—one where we can continue getting people outside, safely exploring the landscapes that make Oregon exceptional.

Respectfully,

Nathan Dwyer
Owner & Lead Guide
ROGUETROTTER Tour Co.
Southern Oregon