

Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government

Support for SB 1593: Recreational Liability Waivers

Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazen and members of the Committee;

I'm writing on behalf of the **Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce**, and **Onward Eugene**, our Economic Development organization housed within the Chamber. We represent thousands of employers across Lane County and the greater Eugene area. We strongly support SB 1593 and appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

Across Oregon, a broad coalition of employers, recreation providers, tourism stakeholders, and business organizations recognize the urgent need to bring clarity and consistency to recreational liability standards. SB 1593 represents a balanced and pragmatic solution that strengthens Oregon's economic competitiveness while preserving fundamental consumer protections.

Oregon's recreation sector is a cornerstone of our statewide tourism economy and a defining part of our identity. Outdoor and indoor recreation providers including; outfitters, ski areas, gyms and fitness facilities, youth sports organizations, camps, wellness providers, and community recreation operators, collectively generate significant economic activity, support thousands of jobs, and attract visitors who fuel local economies from rural communities to urban centers.

However, increasing litigation exposure and uncertainty around the enforceability of liability waivers have created a challenging operating environment. Insurance premiums continue to rise, coverage availability has tightened, and many providers face unpredictable risk despite operating responsibly and implementing industry-standard safety practices.

Without legislative clarity, Oregon risks placing its recreation economy at a competitive disadvantage compared to neighboring states that provide clearer legal frameworks.

SB 1593 establishes a reasonable and balanced approach by recognizing that recreational activities involve inherent risks that cannot be entirely eliminated without fundamentally altering the experience itself.

Importantly, this bill does not remove an individual's right to pursue damages when negligence occurs. Providers remain fully accountable for unsafe practices or failure to meet reasonable standards of care. Instead, SB 1593 addresses the growing concern around frivolous or opportunistic litigation arising from known and accepted risks, litigation that drives up insurance costs and creates uncertainty for responsible operators.

By reinforcing the enforceability of clearly communicated liability waivers, the bill helps ensure that risk is allocated fairly and predictably while maintaining appropriate legal recourse.

Previous proposals focused narrowly on specific segments of the recreation industry, creating fragmented policy approaches that failed to address the broader challenges facing the sector. SB 1593 takes a more comprehensive approach by recognizing that liability exposure impacts providers across the recreation ecosystem, indoor and outdoor, large and small.

A consistent statewide framework promotes fairness, reduces confusion, and aligns Oregon's legal environment with the realities of how recreation businesses operate today.

Escalating liability and insurance costs ultimately affect participants through higher fees, reduced program availability, and fewer opportunities for community engagement. Providing clear legal standards helps stabilize operating costs and supports continued investment in recreational programming that contributes to public health, workforce attraction, and community vitality.

Oregon's recreation and tourism economy depends on a legal framework that balances consumer protection with economic sustainability. SB 1593 reflects that balance by preserving accountability while improving predictability and fairness for providers across the state.

On behalf of the **Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, Onward Eugene** and our member businesses, we respectfully **urge your support for SB 1593**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brittany Quick-Warner".

Brittany Quick-Warner
President & CEO
Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce