

Submitter: Mark Fitzsimons
On Behalf Of: Tualatin Riverkeepers
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1593
Re: SB 1593

Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazan, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1953.

I work for Tualatin Riverkeepers, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Tualatin River and helping the community engage with the river. This includes paddle craft rentals, guided paddle trips, walks, and habitat restoration projects; all of which our watershed communities are deeply involved in. I train volunteers and lead trips for community members as well as staff and elected officials from the organizations and communities along the Tualatin River National Water Trail. I experience firsthand the powerful connection that occurs when people participate in activities that directly engage them with the natural world. These experiences are critical to sustain and nurture our community's stewardship of the world that we all live in.

Protecting Stewardship Work: We organize essential volunteer-driven events—including river cleanups, invasive plant removal, and habitat restoration—that directly benefit Oregon's environment. The liability protections provided by this bill will help ensure that we will be able to continue to obtain the insurance necessary to offer these community services.

Ensuring Access and Safety: Our paddle trips provide important physical and mental health benefits to the public. SB 1593 brings Oregon in line with other Western states, restoring a fair, common-sense legal framework that allows us to operate without the looming threat of, or inability to obtain, insurance.

SB 1593 will enable small, non-profit organizations like the Tualatin Riverkeepers to continue to offer these opportunities in a responsible manner. There is no downside to SB 1593, only significant upside for the people of Oregon. Passing SB 1593 is essential for the continued success of our organization and for ensuring that outdoor recreation and conservation work remain affordable and accessible. We urge your support for this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Fitzsimons