



February 9, 2026

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

From: The Pacific Northwest Ski Areas' Association

**RE: Support for SB1593 (ORCA)**

My name is Jordan Elliott. I live in Bend. I am the president of the Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association, representing more than 40 ski areas across five states, including Oregon's larger ski areas and small nonprofit operations such as Mt. Ashland, Anthony Lakes, Warner Canyon, and Ferguson Ridge.

I must acknowledge a difficult truth: outdoor recreation involves real, natural risks. People can get hurt. And sometimes, families are changed forever. When those things happen, it affects all members of our community. I have deep compassion for those impacted, and I appreciate the seriousness of the issues before you.

We support SB 1593, the Oregon Recreation and Commerce Affordability Act. As someone who works in outdoor recreation across all of Oregon's peer states, I see firsthand that liability waivers are a broadly accepted and ordinary part of participation in voluntary recreational activities. The public record on OLIS itself reflects overwhelming public support for waiver reform in Oregon, submitted over more than a decade and across multiple legislative sessions. Waivers are a pretty normal thing, and outsiders looking in are astounded to see how complicated some in the Oregon legislature have been positioning such a simple issue. We urge this committee and the Oregon Legislature to pass SB 1593 and restore the power of waivers to Oregon for all modes of recreation, health, and fitness.

I'd like to devote the rest of my testimony to another important component of SB 1593: the economic study.

In 2024, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that outdoor recreation contributed \$1.2 trillion to the U.S. economy. Oregon's reported share was \$8.4 billion. That figure is substantial, but it understates the true impact.

In Oregon, Travel Oregon conducted the study used for BEA reporting and counted only the spending associated when dollars traveled more than 50 miles. That methodology captures tourist spending but excludes local contribution entirely. Ski area season pass holders from Bend, Ashland, Baker City, Hood River and Government Camp, all travel less than 50 miles, therefore their spending is not included in state data.

Those local recreation dollars support jobs, small businesses, and tax revenue, from gas stations and coffee shops to restaurants and service providers in our communities. When that activity is not measured, the sector is undervalued in policy discussions.

SB 1593 restores the enforceability of waivers, helps put Oregon on even footing with peer recreation states, and recognizes outdoor recreation as the major economic engine that it is. What gets properly measured gets properly managed.

I urge your support of SB 1593.

Jordan Elliott

President

The Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association