

NATIONAL COAST TRAIL ASSOCIATION



February 28, 2026

House Committee on Rules. Salem, Oregon

RE: Oppose SB 1517, Support if Amended with -A11 or -A15 / “Waivers of Liability”

Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Elmer and Pham, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for all the time and effort you are putting into SB 1517 and into fixing Oregon’s recreation liability laws. **We especially appreciate the many amendments that have been proposed** to try to get this right for recreation providers, land stewards, and nonprofits.

Many non-profit organizations work with volunteers to make projects happen across the state. They depend on clear, enforceable waivers to effectively manage risk and to safely involve volunteers in trail building, maintenance, and conservation work without putting them and their board members at unreasonable legal risk.



As currently written today, we cannot support SB 1517. Earlier versions did not clearly protect stewardship work and included too many exceptions that weakened waivers and left us exposed. The recent -A8 amendment is a big improvement, but still does not provide the clear, stable protections we need.

We CAN support SB 1517 . . . IF either the -A11 or -A15 amendments are adopted:

- **-A11** would put into SB 1517 the same policy language we have supported all session in **SB 1593A**. It allows waivers for ordinary negligence in recreation and stewardship activities, but still lets people sue for gross negligence, reckless conduct, willful misconduct, or intentional harm. **This is the balanced approach used in many other western states.**
- **-A15** would simply clarify that liability waivers are enforceable, which is also an improvement and **would apply broadly** if that is the compromise the Legislature prefers.

Recreational liability protections are not about avoiding responsibility. They are about making sure guides, outfitters, land trusts, conservancies, and volunteer trail programs can keep operating safely and affordably, while still being fully accountable for serious misconduct.

Please oppose SB 1517 in its current form, and only move it forward if -A11 or -A15 is adopted.

Thank you again for your leadership and for supporting the organizations and volunteers who care for Oregon’s trails and natural places.



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COAST TRAIL

Give us the legal “tool” needed to build and maintain the Oregon Coast Trail!

Albert LePage, Executive Director / Eugene, Oregon