



March 2, 2026

TO: Members of the House Committee on Rules
FR: Derek Sangston, Oregon Business & Industry
RE: Opposition to SB 1517A – Unworkable Liability Waivers

Chair Bowman, Vice-chairs Elmer and Pham, members of the House Committee on Rules. For the record, I am Derek Sangston, policy director and counsel for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. Our 1,500 member companies, approximately 75% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 1517A. OBI opposes SB 1517 because, while it seemingly promises to broadly protect both indoor and outdoor recreation businesses from claims of simple negligence that arise out of recreational activities, the bill would actually establish a regulatory system that is worse than current law due to the exemptions it includes from those protections.

This session the legislature has the opportunity to correct an overly burdensome policy plaguing an important industry in Oregon and help lower consumer prices. To accomplish this, the bill would need allow to businesses – both indoor and outdoor and those engaged in both the recreation and health/fitness industries – to protect themselves from litigation they do not face in Washington, Nevada, California, and Colorado. Unfortunately, SB 1517A would not provide the needed relief to an industry that [supports sustained employment and payroll across Oregon and billions of dollars in state spending](#).

Oregon is facing an affordability crisis in recreation, health, and fitness. Prices are rising, businesses are closing, insurers are leaving the state, and Oregon families are losing access to the recreational activities they love and cherish. Not only are businesses in Oregon already the 7th most regulated state in the country, but businesses engaged in the recreation, health, and fitness industries are additionally burdened by a regulatory scheme that does not properly balance the need for businesses need to be accountable to their customers while acknowledging the inherent risk associated with participating in the activities those businesses provide. This policy and many others like it are a significant factor contributing to Oregon ranking of 47th for business friendliness, as a state's liability climate is a metric CNBC considers when making in that ranking.

By failing to restore a long-standing standard that governed liability for decades, SB 1517 would continue to deny Oregon's recreational businesses with a fair and predictable framework that allows responsible recreation providers to operate while preserving consumer protections. Instead, it would saddle the industry with a scheme insurers have already claimed would not solve

the underlying issue and continue to deny an industry-wide solution. Under the system created by SB 1517, recreational businesses would continue to struggle to purchase affordable insurance policies and consumers would struggle to afford high prices to the extent businesses are even able to continue to offer these services.

For those reasons, I urge this committee to amend SB 1517A in a way that ensures this important industry can thrive and grow in Oregon. Thank you for your consideration.

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