

Submitter: Matthew Wood
On Behalf Of: Mt Hood Ski Patrol
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Pham, and members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Wood, I am the Patrol Chief AKA Chief Operating Officer of the nearly 300-strong all-volunteer Mt. Hood Ski Patrol, headquartered in Portland, OR. I grew up in Portland and have been skiing on Mt. Hood for 52 of my 59 years. I am a 12-year member of MHSP.

As land stewards, recreation providers and users, and nonprofit advocates, recreational liability protections are vital to the health and fitness of Oregonians.

We need liability waiver reform that aligns Oregon's laws with those of other states, reducing costs and creating greater certainty for small organizations. That in turn enables our many outdoor recreation organizations to continue protecting access and opportunities for recreation and stewardship activities alike.

In this session, the Protect Oregon Recreation coalition has consistently shared support for the policy language in SB 1593A as a workable solution that would meet the needs of the outdoor recreation community.

SB 1517A, as passed by the -7 will not provide our organizations with greater certainty or reduce our insurance costs. There is no protection for stewardship activities and the many explicit exceptions to what can be included in waivers would put the ski areas at even greater risk than the already untenable status quo.

However, we could support the moving of SB 1517A forward with the -A11 or -A15 amendments. The -A11 amendment contains the language we've been asking for all along, and we're also willing to trade the certainties of SB 1593A for the broad applicability of -A15 if that is the legislature's provided route toward a compromise.

Thank you for understanding the plight of all outdoor recreators in Oregon, whether skiers, climbers, kayakers or members of any part of the large industry that serves them. We need a liability strategy that serves the people and the State.

Thanks for your consideration,
Matt Wood
MHSP # 1768
2025-25 Patrol Chief

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