

# **MBD Development Manager, Mt. Hood Meadows Oreg., LLC**

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## **Testimony Opposing SB 1517 A without Amendments; Supporting SB 1593 A-11 (Sen. Meek); A-14 (Rep. Emerson Levy) and other Amendments consistent with SB 1593A**

**March 1, 2026**

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Pham,  
and Member of the House Rules Committee:

My name is Matthew B. Drake, Manager of Mt. Hood Meadows Oreg., LLC, which owns and operates Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort and Cooper Spur Mountain Resort, an Oregon-based organization founded in 1967. I speak on behalf of our 1,250 team members and in agreement with the hundreds of recreation businesses, nonprofits, conservation groups, and parks and recreation managers who have joined the Protect Oregon Recreation Coalition to bring about meaningful liability waiver reform in Oregon. This testimony updates my prior testimony of February 15, 2026 to address Amendments before the House Rules Committee today.

I am testifying in support of the A-11 (Sen. Mark Meek) and the A-14 (Rep. Emerson Levy) and other Amendments to SB 1517A which align the statutory language more closely to SB 1593A, our preferred legislation to address the crisis facing Oregon's recreation industry in a simple and common sense manner. If there are additional Amendments under consideration, we encourage the committee to align these to the letter and spirit of SB 1593A.

Over the last ten years, Mt. Hood Meadows Oreg., LLC, and many other Oregon recreation service providers, have submitted testimony in each legislative session to address Oregon's liability waiver crisis. The 2014 Bagley decision invalidated enforceable liability waivers, triggering a surge in ordinary negligence lawsuits that have driven special-risk insurers from our state. Oregon is now, as one national insurer put it, "an extreme outlier", a no-go zone for the specialized providers that make safe, professionally managed recreation possible.

SB 1593A restores the balanced standard Oregon maintained for decades: enforceable waivers for ordinary negligence, full accountability for gross negligence and reckless conduct, and aligns us with every other western state. It passed the Senate Commerce Committee unanimously with broad bipartisan support from ski areas, gyms, outfitters, guides, nonprofits, conservation groups, and the thousands of Oregonians who value affordable, accessible recreation.

As you know, SB 1593A is currently stalled in the Senate Rules Committee for reasons that appear to be more about politics and less about good public policy. I am concerned about comments made by Sen. Anthony Broadman in The Oregonian on February 26, 2026: *"I think we will know in coming years, depending on how many lawsuits get filed, whether it's too many or not enough... That's the best barometer for whether our state has a healthy insurance market and a healthy outdoor recreation market."* More lawsuits are the problem that Oregon desperately needs to correct. I urge the Oregon House to advance SB 1593A as the most effective and implementable legislative solution for Oregon recreation service providers and all Oregonians.

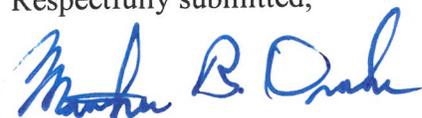
SB 1517A as passed by the Senate would worsen the crisis, not solve it. The Oregonian Editorial Board, insurers, and the overwhelming majority of recreation providers have all reached the same conclusion: this version leaves Oregon worse off than not having any liability waiver reform legislation this session.

We could support SB 1517A, but only with the -11 Amendments. Without the -11, we oppose the bill and request that SB 1593A be advanced as the vehicle for liability waiver reform. We also support applying an enforceable waiver for minors with parental consent, as outlined in the -14 Amendment.

The stakes extend well beyond ski resorts. Gyms, rafting guides, trail outfitters, parks departments, and volunteer nonprofits all face the same exposure. Without enforceable waivers, unaffordable insurance will force providers to raise prices, cut services, or close, reducing access for families, youth, and the rural communities that depend on recreation tourism.

We are grateful for the good-faith leadership of Representative Emerson Levy, Senator Mark Meek, and others who have worked earnestly toward meaningful liability waiver reform in Oregon. Thank you for your diligence on behalf of Oregon's recreation community and economy.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew B. Drake  
Manager, Mt. Hood Meadows Oreg., LLC  
President, MBD Development, LLC