

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

Deschutes River Adventures in Maupin, OR is mine and my husbands' long time business. We provide whitewater rafting tours on the Lower Deschutes River in the spring and summer. Operating since 1981, we were the first and longest running outfitter on the Deschutes River. We have a staff of 25 skilled and passionate outdoors people who work and train continuously to provide safe and professional trips all season long. Even though we have never had a claim, our insurance costs have skyrocketed in the last decade. Underwriters know that we have only one or two options for liability insurance, due in large part to Oregon being the only state in the west that doesn't uphold the liability waiver. This will put us out of business by either becoming unaffordable, or even worse, not available at all.

SB 1517-7, as written, would make the situation worse than the current law, not better. If passed as is, we would be in a worse situation than we are now, and the current situation is unsustainable.

For outfitters and guides to survive, we need the legislature to declare that liability waivers are enforceable as a matter of public policy. The common-sense language that is in SB 1593 does that.

We are not asking for a free pass. We are just asking for the same simple, balanced approach that every other state around us uses (and Oregon used to use). A well-tested solution that recognizes that there are inherent risks to recreational activities while still giving guests an avenue to bring a case to the courts.

We want to get back to showing people Oregon's outdoors. And we are running out of time; if we don't do something this session, there are going to be many outfitters who will be out of business next year.

Thank you for considering this important matter.

Kate Wallace
Andy Kreipe
Deschutes River Adventures