



P.O. Box 715, Myrtle Point, OR 97458
(541) 290-2671
John D. McCollum, Jr.

March 1, 2026

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

Eden Ridge Outfitters strongly **oppose** SB 1517-7.

I am writing to respectfully urge you to oppose SB 1517 as amended by either the -6 or the -7 amendments.

Eden Ridge Outfitters, LLC is an equal opportunity recreation service provider offering a wide variety of hunts from Bobcat, Roosevelt Elk, Big Horn Sheep, Deer (Columbia Blacktail, Columbia Whitetail, and Mule), Upland Birds, and Bear hunts. We are a small family business operating for 25 years. We pride ourselves in providing the best and most successful recreation experience for our clients. Our guides are highly experienced and professional.

As a supporter of Oregon's recreation and fitness community, I remain opposed to SB 1517 -6 or -7. It does not solve the insurance crisis facing providers across the state. The amendments, while representing improvement, still fail to provide clarity and predictability for insurers who need to re-enter or remain in Oregon. No other state does what this proposal seeks.

SB1517-7, 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 already in SB 1593 does just that. **Please refocus your efforts to support SB1593.**

Also, SB1517 addresses the liability issue only for ski areas and does nothing to address the same issue for thousands of other small outfitting and guiding businesses like ours. The issue of unenforceable liability waivers in Oregon isolates one segment of the recreation and fitness economy and does nothing to address the insurance crisis affecting ALL recreation service providers. This SB1517 leaves all other waiver users fully exposed. Ignoring your support of prior legislation, effectively throws you under the bus. SB1517 does nothing to balance or stabilize the insurance market; does nothing to improve access, affordability, or safety. Further entrenches Oregon as an outlier state, where all other western states honor waivers.

Insurance premiums have tripled in the past 5 years, which makes it challenging to find one that will cover different recreation opportunities.



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SB 1517 would not be a viable or fair solution. It's not good for consumers, it is not good for Oregon's wild areas, and it's not good for small businesses and the people who work for them.

If we continue down this path, if we continue to stall on a true comprehensive solution, prices for guests will keep rising, wages will not, small family businesses will disappear, and guided recreation in Oregon will become something only the wealthiest people can afford, provided only large corporations with razor-thin margins and teams of lawyers.

There is a simple solution to this issue, and it has very broad bipartisan support, and it is the same simple solution that California, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona and Colorado already have. A solution that brings the system back into balance, recognizing there are inherent risks to recreational activities while still giving guests an avenue to bring a case to the courts.

SB1517 as amended by either the 6 or 7 amendments is not that and passing it would be devastating to outfitter and guides, rural economies, affordable insurance and access to the outdoors.

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.

As an outfitter and guide, we are required by Federal Agencies, such as Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service to provide proof of insurance naming these agencies as an additional insurer. We cannot even be given a permit without this insurance compliance.

We want to get back to showing people Oregon's outdoors, not just now, but in the future, and we are running out of time, if we don't do something this session. I can guarantee you there will be outfitter and guides who will be out of business next year.

Respectfully,

JOHN D. MCCOLLUM, Jr.
Eden Ridge Outfitters, LLC