

Submitter: Ben DeJarnette  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

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

I'm a first-time entrepreneur who founded Bike the Gorge in Cascade Locks three years ago, and I am proud of the growth we've achieved, the employment opportunities we've created, and the outdoor recreation experiences we've provided to thousands of residents and visitors every year. I'd like to continue this work for many years to come, but our ability to do so remains in doubt, especially if the Legislature does not develop a meaningful solution to Oregon's outlier liability laws.

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 outfitters who will be out of business next year.

Thank you for your leadership,  
Ben DeJarnette