

Submitter: Dave Tragethon  
On Behalf Of: Northwest Ski Club Council  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

Testimony for House Rules Committee Regarding SB 1517

?Date: March 2, 2026

To: Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Pham, and Members of the House Rules Committee

From: Dave Tragethon, Happy Valley, OR

Subject: Opposition to SB 1517 unless amended

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

?My name is Dave Tragethon. I am a resident of Happy Valley and have spent over 30 years working in the heart of Oregon's ski industry. I am appearing before you today as a Board Member of the Northwest Ski Club Council (NWSCC).

?At our board meeting this past Wednesday, our leadership voted officially to oppose SB 1517 unless it is amended to include the essential protections originally found in SB 1593—specifically, the recognition of inherent risk, the enforceability of liability waivers, and the availability of summary judgment.

?As an industry veteran, I have seen our mountain communities survive many hardships, but we cannot survive the legal climate created by SB 1517 in its current form. Quite simply: SB 1517 is uninsurable.

?This isn't just about large ski resorts; it is about the hundreds of small, family-owned recreation businesses that are the backbone of Oregon's tourism economy. From rafting guides on the Deschutes and climbing gyms in Portland to youth mountain biking camps and small-town equipment outfitters, these providers are facing a 'liability cliff.'

?Major insurers have already gone on the record stating that SB 1517—due to its lack of summary judgment and its complex loopholes—will not bring them back to the Oregon market. Without the ability for a judge to dismiss meritless cases involving the inherent risks of the outdoors, a single frivolous lawsuit can bankrupt a small business. If they can't get insurance, they can't open their doors.

?Oregon is currently a national outlier. Our neighbors in Washington, Idaho, and California have figured this out by allowing for clear waiver enforcement. We are simply asking for the same level of certainty so our small businesses can survive.

?As this bill moves forward in this committee, I urge you to support the -8 amendment or return to the principles of SB 1593. We don't need a bill that makes a good press release; we need a solution that allows a guide service in Bend or a ski area in Government Camp to buy the insurance they need to operate.

?Please don't let 'good enough' be the enemy of a solution that actually protects Oregon's outdoor legacy.

Dave Tragethon  
Happy Valley, OR 97086