



March 2, 2026

Support for -A11 or -A15 Amendments to SB 1517A: Recreation Liability

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

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Trails Coalition.

Our advisory council includes representatives from more than thirty federal, state, and local agencies, trail user groups, tourism partners, and volunteer organizations. We represent walkers, bikers, runners, paddlers, equestrians, adaptive equipment users, skiers, snowmobilers, motorized trail enthusiasts, and stewardship organizations.

NGOs within our coalition are responsible for more than 50% of the annual trail maintenance conducted on federal lands in Oregon as well as much of the trail maintenance across our local and state-managed parks and privately-held youth camps and conservation lands where stewardship partners are generally required to hold all liability for their own volunteer crews.

I'm writing today to share our deep concerns with SB 1517 A unless further amended.

Our coalition members seek changes to Oregon waiver laws in line with our neighboring states, allowing waivers to be enforced and reducing liability risk for non-profits and small businesses who offer outdoor recreation and stewardship programming. We are not seeking any greater protection than what is offered to our peers working in California, Washington, or Idaho.

As currently written, SB 1517 A does not address the liability risk of stewardship and restoration activities. Its long list of waiver exceptions could leave Oregon's non-profits holding even greater risk than the status quo.

Throughout this session we've voiced our full-throated support for a different bill, SB 1593, and we would be equally supportive of the -A11 amendment to SB 1517A. We could also support the broad applicability of the -A15 amendment if that is the legislature's preferred route toward a compromise.

We put great value on all Oregonians having access to outdoor recreation as well as all members of our families having access to volunteer stewardship activities as is safe and appropriate. We hope for your support for a different path forward for more balanced Oregon law regarding recreation waivers. SB 1517 A, without further amendments, does not provide the balance needed. Thank you.