



## **SB 1517 is job-killer that will continue increasing costs for outdoor activities all over Oregon**

Chair Bowman, and members of the committee:

As a representative of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association, which serves the entire Oregon Coast from Washington to California, I am writing to express strong opposition for SB 1517. Not only is it the wrong solution, by our estimation, but it actually could make the situation worse for recreation providers all over the state. These are small businesses in most cases.

Our work on this initiative is not in support of the insurance industry. We are fighting for outdoor recreation providers. Only one industry benefits from the status quo, which creates a wide open world of lawsuits, and wants to keep it this way. Under SB 1517, that will continue to be the case. And our guides and recreational business providers will continue having to raise prices because of the increased risk of lawsuits for the inherent risk of outdoor activities.

Skyrocketing insurance costs, which are the result of Oregon's current policy regarding liability waivers, are affecting not just ski resorts, but also river rafting guides, kayak guides, fishing guides, golf courses and many other businesses. Recreational advocates and partners long have been seeking a liability waiver system for protections to recreational providers, bringing them in line with surrounding states in the west. Because there are no liability protections for recreational providers such as guides, ski lodges, golf courses, gyms, outdoor activity businesses and many others, insurance rates are high due to costs of sometimes frivolous lawsuits. The ski industry is left with an extremely small number of carriers available.

SB 1517 includes a long list of exceptions to claims that can be included in activity waivers, leaving Oregon's small businesses and volunteer organizations holding an untenable level of liability risk. This bill also neglects to include waivers signed by legal guardians of people who are not minors.

This environment drives up the cost of participating in outdoor activities safely and affordably. It is much safer for inexperienced outdoors enthusiasts to engage in activities with the support and guidance of experienced guides.

***There is an alternative***

Advocates have worked to craft legislation that actually accomplishes the stated goal of protecting guides, ski lodges, golf courses and other recreational businesses to keep cost down and improve accessibility for participants. That is [SB 1593](#).

This bill strikes a balance that actually protects recreation providers in their efforts to create safe outdoor opportunities in a meaningful way, while ensuring that claims for gross negligence, reckless conduct, willful misconduct and other intentional acts can be addressed through the courts.

There is a better way. We need to be following the Oregon Way, and rejecting this legislation in favor of SB 1593, which was hammered out in a good-faith effort by all sides.