

Submitter: Greg Hedrick  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

I'm writing as a small Oregon guide and business owner who depends on clear, workable liability laws to stay in business.

Oregon is currently one of the hardest states on the West Coast to operate an outdoor recreation business. Unlike every neighboring state, our liability waivers are not clearly enforceable. As a result, insurance premiums are climbing fast and coverage options are shrinking. For many of us, just finding insurance for the upcoming season is becoming a real concern.

SB 1517-7 would not fix this problem. As written, it would actually make the situation worse. The current path is not sustainable for small guiding businesses like mine.

We are not asking to avoid responsibility. We are asking for the same balanced framework every other surrounding state uses — one that recognizes inherent risks in outdoor recreation while still allowing legitimate claims to be heard in court. That's reasonable. That's fair. And it has already been tested elsewhere.

SB 1593 provides that clarity. It has bipartisan support and offers a straightforward solution: declare liability waivers enforceable as a matter of public policy. Nothing complicated. Nothing experimental. Just common-sense alignment with other states.

Most outfitters and guides in Oregon are small, family-run operations. We create jobs, support rural communities, and introduce people to public lands safely and responsibly. We are not large corporations. We are not hiding behind lobbyists. We are small business owners trying to survive in an increasingly difficult environment.

If the legislature does not act this session to provide clear waiver enforceability, more outfitters will close. And outdoor recreation in Oregon will become something only large operators or wealthy clients can afford.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 1593 and oppose SB 1517-7. Oregon's small guiding businesses need clarity, stability, and the ability to operate on the same footing as the rest of the West Coast.