

Date:	March 3, 2026
To:	Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Elmer and Pham, and Members of the House Committee on Rules
From:	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Justin Low
Subject:	Oppose – SB 1517A as written

For the record, my name is Justin Low, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). **AOC respectfully opposes SB 1517A as written.**

Oregon’s 36 counties play a critical role in providing safe, accessible, and affordable recreation opportunities across our state, especially in rural and frontier communities where counties may be the primary public provider of parks and outdoor programming.

Counties manage and operate thousands of acres of parks, campgrounds, boat ramps, fairgrounds, forestlands, trails, and waterfront access points. In many communities, county facilities are the only publicly available recreation infrastructure.

Counties routinely partner with their community to offer a wide array of recreational programs and activities, including:

- Sports tournaments at county fairgrounds and regional parks
- 4-H and OSU Extension outdoor education programs
- Equestrian events and rodeos at county fairgrounds
- Seasonal festivals, endurance events, and trail runs
- Vendor-operated zip lines, ropes courses, and outdoor adventure concessions within county parks

While we strongly support efforts to improve recreational liability laws in Oregon, the current version of SB 1517A contains ambiguities and exceptions that create uncertainty and represent a step backward in the effort to protect recreation providers and the communities we serve.

AOC has supported SB 1593 and the protection it provides. We believe the framework reflected in the -A11 amendments to SB 1517A achieves those same

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protections in a clearer and more workable manner, and we support the adoption of those amendments.

Alternatively, in the spirit of recognizing the work that has gone into seeking middle ground on this bill, **we also support the -A15 amendment**. While the -A15 may not include every preferred protection, this amendment moves the policy forward and provides broader applicability of waivers in a meaningful manner.

Oregonians value access to the outdoors, and county governments are proud to steward and activate those spaces for them. **SB 1517A, with the -A11 or -A15 amendments, would help ensure that counties can continue to do so responsibly.** Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Low

AOC Legislative Affairs Manager