

March 3, 2026

Representative Ben Bowman, Chair
900 Court St. NE. H-295
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 1517A with the -A11 or -A15 Amendments

Chair Bowman, and members of the House Rules Committee:

My name is Justin D. Gericke and I am writing this letter in support of SB 1517A as proposed for amendment in the -A11 or -A15 amendments. The legislature needs to make the insanity on recreational liability stop. It has been over 12 years since this judicially created nightmare began and, frankly, it is beyond embarrassing to look at the history of the legislature's failed attempts to remedy the problem.

Oregon is the ONLY state in the west that suffers from this imbalance, significantly harming business and recreational opportunities throughout our state. The "Oregon Way" has tragically turned into a circus of trying to rewrite and overcredit what is really a very simple fix. On this point, I note that the legislature whipped into lightening quick action to pass necessary legislation to restore recreational immunity to units of local government. Complete relief on that VERY SIMILAR ISSUE took only two sessions. It is unfathomable to me that the legislature cannot pass similar protections for recreation providers in our state, re-aligning Oregon with the rest of the west. Failure to act will irretrievably harm the outdoor recreation industry in this state (it already has), limit available recreational opportunities (it already has), and significantly impact what used to be the pride of Oregon – outdoor recreation.

Last time I checked, there is currently a \$4.6 million lawsuit pending against the Hoodoo Ski Resort in Central Oregon because an experienced skiing family permitted their four-year-old child to venture into an area on the mountain that she should not have been. The lone insurer remaining in this state has stated on the record it will leave this state if there is another large verdict or settlement. Once they are gone, ski resorts throughout the state will be forced to close. The legislature's failure to act has had a profound impact on the outdoor recreation industry and further limitations on the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities are forthcoming if action is not taken now. If not amended, SBS 1517A does nothing to assuage these concerns.

The time for action is NOW ... please return Oregon to the ranks of the Great American West. This is a SIMPLE FIX ... please do not let the elephant in the room this session – the BLAZERS Recovery Act – prevent you from passing SB 1517A as amended by the -A11 or -A15 amendments.

Regards,



Justin D. Gericke