



February 24, 2021

House Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee on Civil Law
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Power, Vice Chair Wallan and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2638: Relating to limitations of liability during the COVID-19 emergency. On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,500 business members, we thank the Legislature for all that you are doing to support our local communities and local businesses across the state during the pandemic.

Our local businesses are grateful for the opportunity to re-open their doors safely and within the state guidelines. The current "must-do" activities for retailers, restaurants, hairstylists and other consumer facing businesses are a helpful roadmap, however there are also a significant amount of recommendations and loosely worded suggestions for businesses to follow. This leaves room for interpretation, and we have heard directly from our members that they are fearful of future litigation as a result of COVID-19.

Oregon has multiple Good Samaritan laws on the books to protect individuals that are providing a service or assisting a fellow citizen in need. These same protections should apply to businesses that are operating in good faith with COVID-19 requirements. We are not suggesting permanent or blanket immunity, but rather temporary and targeted limits to liability for COVID-19 related business decisions. If a business willfully disobeys public health policies, they should absolutely be held responsible. But we encourage policies that support the vast majority of businesses that are trying their best to open their doors in the wake of economic turmoil.

We understand the shared role that businesses have in promoting public health practices to stop the spread of COVID-19, and our business members have actively followed the prescribed protocols. However, now is the time to support our business community and recognize the important role they have played in slowing the spread.

We respectfully request a yes vote on HB 2638.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Katy Brooks
President + CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.