



Orange Torpedo Trips

America's Unique River Adventures

February 10, 2023
Senate Committee on Judiciary 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 754 Recreational Liability Reform

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of SB 754 which would provide important recreational liability reform.

We are a small business guiding people on single day and overnight rafting and river based adventure trips on Oregon's public lands. As regularly promoted by the state through the showcasing in Travel Oregon advertisements, one of the great treasures of Oregon is our incredible outdoor destinations. These outdoor places are important for us as people; plenty of documentation exists showing the physical and mental health benefits of spending time recreating outdoors but they are also a vital vector point for an enormous and essential economic driver for the rural communities of Oregon. Outdoor recreation is a lifeblood for rural communities left behind when consumptive industries declined.

For the general public to fully experience many of these outdoor places they need guides and outfitters to help them. They may lack the skills and/or equipment to enjoy these resources of Oregon. So without a thriving guide industry the state cannot capitalize on the significant economic driver which is outdoor recreation. This vital industry is under threat.

Our activities, by their very nature, are full of inherent risk. As guides and outfitters we exist as risk managers, working to mitigate risk but never fully eliminating it, as that is ultimately impossible in the places we operate. However, it is the inherent risk, the "wild" of the places we operate which is a big part of what makes them special. Our guests sign release forms where we inform them of the risks and where they acknowledge they accept them. This has become the accepted tool for us to ensure our guests understand they are choosing to go on an adventure, not a fully controlled, artificial, theme park ride.

Unfortunately the current legal landscape in Oregon and the lack of a solid foundation for waiver validity, is contributing to an exodus of insurance providers for the outdoor industry. The number of insurance providers for the river industry has essentially dwindled to two providers. This is in large part due to the inconsistent legal landscape around the industry. As the competition of providers has dwindled, the costs of insurance have sky rocketed at the same time food, gas and labor costs have sky rocketed. Our costs increases far out strip our abilities to raise our rates and it is putting providers out of business.



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Passing this legislation will have a direct impact on this trend and will help ensure that outfitting in Oregon is a long-term viable industry. Passing this legislation will help ensure the industry most suited to supporting rural communities in sustainable ways remains viable into the future. Help ensure the state of Oregon can continue to capitalize on our amazing outdoor recreation resources into the future by supporting SB 754.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Weiseth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erik Weiseth
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