

February 15, 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:

Provide a brief introduction of your organization and your goals

The Oregon Outdoor Alliance (OOA) is a membership association represents a cross section of outdoor recreation business, manufacturers, brands, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

Our work together is focused on cultivating a strong outdoor recreation economy, educating a well-trained and skilled workforce, nourishing vibrant outdoor community for all, and advocating for key issues like SB 754 that support those goals.

Given that OOA is comprised of individual members and a range of organizational entities we understand that the risk of running our various organizations is threatened due to the current liability situation in Oregon. Both as leaders in this outdoor recreation space and as enthusiastic participants we share a common concern. Continued Liability Litigation, due to weak laws disregarding outdoor recreation liability waivers carries the clear threat to our memberships' long-term viability. As small medium and large organizations, at each scale has a different level of resiliency and resources to respond to such law suits and are negatively impacted disproportionately. Small to medium sized entities face the most daunting challenge of just affording the litigious process, a negative outcome, and many cases, could mean financial disaster. Larger organizations face absorbing the costs, facing financial hardship, and passing on the costs to users and customers, making outdoor recreation more unaffordable.

As an alliance we share a common expectation for individuals to be prepared for their experience and assume personal accountability while we recreate in Oregon's great outdoors. We also clearly understand that a favorable vote on SB754 does not exempt any organization from gross liability. That said, Oregon has long needed a clear and balanced approach to this issue of Outdoor Recreation Liability Waiver between personal and organizational accountability. As one of the largest State Outdoor Alliances in the country, with over 275 members, we sincerely urge this senate to vote in favor of SB754. With the passage of this bill, we Oregonians will join all the other Western states who have already taken this step in clarifying and strengthening their laws.

Sincerely,

Guy Michael Trombley, Ph.D.
Oregon Outdoor Alliance, Board Member