



February 15, 2023

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Chair Floyd Prozanski
Oregon Street Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prozanski and Committee members,
On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,150 members and 8,500 business in Central Oregon, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in support of SB 754: Relating to releases of liability.

The recreation industry is a critical sector of our economy in Central Oregon, as the region supports numerous large companies in addition to serving as an incubator for start-ups and local small businesses. The impacts are far reaching, as prior to COVID local recreation enthusiasts and visitors spent more than \$1 billion in Central Oregon. This spending supported almost 13,000 full- and part-time jobs, \$484 million in wages and other compensation and roughly \$560 million in GDP contributions.

However, the rising cost of liability insurance, due in part to recent court rulings nullifying Oregon's recreational liability waiver process threatens the health of this industry. The Bend Chamber supports SB 754 as a commonsense solution which will bring our state in line with our neighbors in WA and CA, as well as other Western states with recreation-based economies. We support the legislation for two key reasons:

Protecting local jobs and revenue

Our indoor and outdoor recreation providers generate significant revenue for the region via direct services such as guided raft and ski tours as well as products and gear. Central Oregon is home to many of the state's recreation product businesses, and they are a large employer and a key part of our business ecosystem.

Making Oregon a business-friendly state

Doing business in Oregon can be difficult, especially for small businesses and start-ups. We have a complex regulatory system, significant tax burden for businesses, and labor shortages for virtually every industry. Our state's recreation liability waiver process is yet another barrier for businesses in this sector. With the reasonable waiver reform proposal as outlined in SB 754, Oregon can open the door to more indoor and outdoor businesses and continue our identify as a haven for recreation enthusiasts.

Re-building a business-friendly Oregon is a guiding principle for the Bend Chamber during the 2023 session, and the passage of SB 754 would be a welcome start. We urge a yes vote on the bill and thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

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

Katy Brooks
President & CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce