

February 9, 2024

Dear Senator Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee

Thank you for your interest in SB1576 that will strengthen Recreational Immunity in Oregon. I am an avid trail user and supporter of this proposed legislation.

My recreation of choice is endurance riding. I ride my horses over a predetermined trail and distance in competition. The horse must be in comparable condition to a marathon runner to be successful. In preparation I train on trails locally. Molalla River corridor (BLM), McIver State Park, Tryon State Park, Parrett Mountain (Chehalem Parks & Recreation) and Port Blakely Timber Co properties are all places I frequent. For several years I managed an endurance competition on Deschutes USFS property. I am completely dependent on the good will and permission of the various land owners for access.

I belong to the American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC), Pacific NW Endurance Rides (PNER), Oregon Equestrian Trails (OET) North Valley Chapter, and the Back Country Horsemen (BCH) Territorial Chapter. All have trail maintenance and preservation as a condition of their bylaws. I ride with hand clippers and a foldup saw, as some of the trails are easily overgrown here on the wet side of Oregon. OET and BCH members devote many hours each year to trail clearing and restoration in conjunction with the landowners.

I would like to give a shout out Port Blakely. Other timber companies have closed their properties to public recreation because of the weak Oregon Recreational Immunity laws. Port Blakely continues to allow equine, bikes and hiker access to much of their property. I hope everyone who enjoys the forests treats this resource with respect.

When covid hit a few years ago, outdoor recreation exploded. It has remained popular to this day. It is such a healthy activity, inexpensive and inclusive for everyone. As the Metro area around Portland keeps expanding, trails have disappeared to development. We must do everything we can to insure there is public access to the existing trails.

Thank you so much for your service to the state and your interest in protecting landowners from frivolous lawsuits. I hope a permanent law will eventually be enacted to allow continued trail use for everyone without exposing the landowner to increased liability.

Sincerely,
Lois Fox
Senate District 19