

Submitter: Sandy McLarrin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1576

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee:

RE: Support for Recreational Immunity Fix Amendment to SB 1576

My name is Sandy McLarrin and I live in Pleasant Hill, Oregon and am an avid horseback rider. It seems every year more and more of our trails and riding area is getting fewer and fewer. I believe that in passing the above SB 1576 it will open more land, or at least keep what we have.

Trails and access to nature and outdoor recreation provide so many benefits to individuals and communities including: physical fitness and health benefits, mental health benefits, connection to and appreciation for nature, economic benefits to communities of outdoor recreation visitors and related businesses, safety benefits of alternatives to roadways for walking and biking, community connections.

Improved trails can also help protect sensitive habitat by directing the public away from sensitive areas.

However, recreating in constantly changing outdoor environments also carries possible risk of injury. Without recreational immunity, landowners fear the real risk of expensive lawsuits and cannot afford to keep their trails and lands open to the public. They are especially concerned about increased liability of making trail improvements like bridges, railings, and boardwalks, even though such construction both can better protect sensitive habitat and make trails recreation destinations like beaches, rivers, etc more accessible to all ages and abilities.

This bill provides a critical emergency fix, and we're also eager to see a permanent fix to provide landowners with the assurance they need to plan for future recreation access.

It is important to restore recreational immunity to:

Encourage land managers to keep trails, especially trails providing access to beaches and other recreational areas open to the public.

Provide landowners with the clarity they need to keep planned trail improvement and development projects on track for the benefit of the public and for the preservation of

sensitive habitats.

To ensure that access to recreation areas is equitable, by providing basic protections to land managers who make trail improvements that increase access for a broad range of physical abilities.

To support local outdoor recreation and tourism economies.

To ensure that limited public resources and taxpayer dollars can be spent on park and trail maintenance, management, and development that directly benefits the public and not on fighting lawsuits or on measures that shield landowners from liability without directly benefiting the public.

To ensure that we don't create disincentives to developing off-street paths and keeping them open when we know that even when off-street paths are in need of maintenance, they provide much safer alternatives to walking or riding on high traffic/high speed roadways.

Please pass SB 1576-3 with language that clearly restores recreational immunity for public and private landowners and clearly applies to both improved and unimproved trails.

Thank you.

Concerned Rider

Sandy McLarrin