

February 11, 2024

Senate Judiciary Committee



Re: **Support for -3 Recreational Immunity Fix Amendment to SB 1576**

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

I represent Oregon Equestrian Trails, a nonprofit organization with 700+ avid horseback trail rider members statewide. We are so committed to keeping trails open that we volunteer thousands of hours a year to maintain trails on public land including state parks, county parks, and state forests.

We urge you to support SB 1576-3 because it provides a critical emergency fix to the recreational immunity stripped away by a recent judicial decision. We also want to see a permanent fix to provide landowners with the assurance they need to plan for future recreation access.

SB1576-3 will encourage land managers to keep trails open to the public. Outdoor recreation in changing environments carries a possible risk of injury. Landowners fear the very real possibility of expensive lawsuits and cannot afford to keep their trails and lands open to the public without recreational immunity protection.

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, and economic benefits to communities of outdoor recreation visitors and related businesses.

All fifty states in the U.S. have enacted statutes that confer some degree of liability protection to landowners who allow the general public to use their land for recreational purposes. Please take action now to protect landowners and keep our trails and recreational spaces open to the public.

Please pass SB 1576-3 with language that clearly restores recreational immunity for public and private landowners and applies to both improved and unimproved trails. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Kim McCarrel*

VP Public Lands  
Oregon Equestrian Trails