



February 26, 2024

House Committee on Judiciary  
Chair Jason Kropf  
Oregon Street Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Anderson and Wallen, and Committee members,  
On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,600 members and 8,500 businesses in Central Oregon, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in support of SB 1576A.

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.

The Bend Chamber supported 2023 legislation which would have brought Oregon in line with our neighbors in WA and CA regarding recreational immunity. This session we were pleased to support amendments to SB 1576 in the Senate Judiciary Committee as a temporary solution to the issue, and the goal of developing a comprehensive change in the 2025 session. Our underlying support for the bill is based on two key factors:

**Protecting local jobs and revenue**

The recreation industry generates 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 in many industries. Our state's recreation liability laws are among the weakest in the country, and yet another barrier for businesses in this sector. We support reasonable reform allowing Oregon to welcome more indoor and outdoor businesses and continue our identity as a haven for recreation enthusiasts.

Re-building a business-friendly Oregon is a guiding principle for the Bend Chamber during the 2024 session, and the passage of this bill 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", written over a thin horizontal line.

Katy Brooks  
President & CEO  
Bend Chamber of Commerce