

Submitter: Patrick Baird
On Behalf Of: Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club Board of Directors
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB179

On behalf of the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club (WMBC), we write to express our strong support for SB 179, which would provide essential liability protections to private landowners who open their land for public recreational use. This bill represents a crucial step forward for outdoor access and recreation in Oregon, and particularly for communities like ours in Wallowa County.

WMBC has been actively developing partnerships with private landowners in the Wallowa Valley, working toward a vision of establishing new mountain bike trails and recreational access points. These collaborations hold great promise—but they also depend entirely on one thing: the confidence of landowners that they will not be exposed to undue legal risk simply for allowing their land to be used and enjoyed by others.

Currently, Wallowa County faces a surprising lack of access to mountain biking trails despite being surrounded by some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the state. SB 179 would help unlock opportunities to change that. By removing a major barrier to landowner participation, this legislation would open the door to expanded recreation, greater access to the outdoors, and all the physical, mental, and social benefits that come with it.

Increased trail access would not only benefit local residents—especially youth, who need healthy outlets and opportunities to explore nature—but would also attract visitors to our region, supporting both health and local economies. Mountain biking promotes wellness, fosters stewardship of the land, and strengthens community ties.

For these reasons, the board of the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club fully endorses SB 179. We respectfully urge you to support this important legislation and help make Oregon's outdoors more accessible to all.