

Submitter:

Jeffrey Omelchuck

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1517

Dear Representative Watanabe,

I have been a member of Senate District 17 and House District 34 for over 30 years. I am reaching out today to express concern over the state of liability related to outdoor recreation and its providers. I am an avid skier and a member of the Mt. Hood Ski Patrol, first responders to accidents and injuries that happen at all 3 ski resorts on Mt. Hood since 1937. I have seen the insurance challenges facing resorts, volunteer groups, and community members in addressing their increased liability and the associated costs. This has directly decreased the opportunities for Oregonians to enjoy the outdoors we all cherish and has the potential to close all Oregon ski resorts and other organized outdoor recreation activities. HB1517 was an attempt to resolve this issue for ski resorts but it is flawed and only addresses ski resorts. ORCA2026 (SB1593 and HB4071) has broad support including most or all Oregon ski areas, Protect Oregon Recreation, the Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Assoc., over 150 other partner organizations, and is supported by a bipartisan group of 20 legislators in the house and senate. HB4071 brings Oregon liability law in-line with that of California and Washington enabling Oregon ski areas to buy liability insurance like resorts in other states. Without liability insurance no ski resort can operate - we will lose all skiing in Oregon.

I strongly urge you to vote against SB1517 as a flawed and limited measure, and to vote for ORCA2026 (SB1593 and HB4071), a more comprehensive measure to bring Oregon liability law in-line with other western states.