

Submitter: Ari Hoffman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517
Opposition Testimony for SB1517
In Support of ORCA2026 (SB1593 / HB4071)

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB1517 and in support of SB1593 and HB4071, also known as ORCA2026.

SB1517 harms outdoor recreation participants and providers by ignoring more than a decade of documented public input and bipartisan work calling for comprehensive, all-inclusive waiver reform in Oregon. Instead of addressing the broader liability crisis facing outdoor recreation, SB1517 narrowly focuses on a small subset of ski resort operations while leaving the majority of recreation providers and participants exposed.

As a member of the Mt. Hood outdoor and skiing community, I am particularly concerned that SB1517 fails to account for non-resort entities that operate within mountain environments. Volunteer-run ski clubs, racing programs, and community organizations that host events on and off resort property remain unprotected under this proposal. This creates real risk that these programs will no longer be able to operate due to insurance constraints or liability exposure.

More broadly, SB1517 raises a fundamental question that remains unanswered: why are non-ski-based recreation providers being left exposed under Oregon law? Biking, rafting, climbing, hunting, fishing, and volunteer-led outdoor programs all face the same liability challenges, yet SB1517 does nothing to address their needs.

ORCA2026, through SB1593 and HB4071, offers a balanced and inclusive approach. It aligns Oregon with other western states, protects participants and providers from ordinary negligence claims while preserving accountability for gross negligence, and ensures that outdoor recreation remains accessible and affordable for families and communities across the state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose SB1517 and instead advance SB1593 and HB4071 as the appropriate, statewide solution for outdoor recreation liability reform in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.