

February 3, 2026

Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: Oppose SB 1517, Support 1593/HB 4071

Chair Senator Prozanski,
Vice-Chair Senator Thatcher,

Skiing along with other outdoor recreational activities has been a foundational pursuit of mine since I grew up in Southern Oregon. I've missed maybe three seasons over the last 50+ as a skier and two were related to injuries, but I've never missed a year without some kind of recreational pursuit.

In preparation for the 2026 session an extensive coalition of recreational interests worked to find a comprehensive solution to the liability issues that ski areas and others face given Oregon's existing statutes. This coalition represents a broad range of organizations representing high school clubs, community groups and organizations covering virtually every recreational interest in Oregon. **This coalition also extends to the bipartisan and bicameral bill legislative endorsements in SB 1593 and HB 4071.** It should be clear that this proposed legislation is the path forward with the greatest support representing an incredibly wide range of interests across Oregon. **It's a standard that honestly should set the bar for moving policy during a long or short session.**

Unfortunately, a new piece of legislation, SB 1517 has been introduced and is scheduled for a public hearing in Senate Judiciary February 4. This legislation is not supported by the coalition and truly throws a curve ball in this conversation since the coalition bills have been publicly available for weeks and was pulled together with countless interests.

Oregon is the only state in the western US that has limited insurance access/market due to the liability statutes that have effectively nullified the enforceability of liability waivers. Every ski area in Oregon pays a substantially higher premium as a result and for some of the resorts that increase is in millions of dollars.

This is an economic development issue, and I don't need to tell you how important economic stability is to Oregon and given a winter that has been hit by the worst snow pack in a decade having a business environment which costs more due to lack of regulatory controls combined small businesses in the winter recreation sites of Oregon are suffering and so are their staff.

The best outcome of this February's session is passing the coalition legislation and a lot of February powder. While this letter is focused on skiing and my interests, the policy adjustments in the coalition bills will benefit the broader recreational community and the rural parts of Oregon who depend on small businesses and a broad range of recreational access and programs that extend well beyond the winter sports.

Respectfully submitted.

Jim McCauley

Lake Oswego, Oregon