



Mt. Hood Ski Patrol

P.O. Box 4384
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

2/4/2026

RE: Opposition to SB 1517, and Endorsement of SB 1593

To The Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee

I am submitting this testimony as the president of the Mt Hood Ski Patrol. We were the first ski patrol in the US, founded in 1937. Our 300 volunteers are first responders at all of the ski areas on Mt Hood, plus a variety of outdoor summer operations and the Portland Marathon. Our mission is to make sure that outdoor recreation is fun and that everyone goes home safe.

This year, our membership is very concerned about the future of outdoor recreation in Oregon, due to our liability waiver laws. For the last 10 years our laws have been different from Washington, California, and all the other western states, resulting in much more litigation. A few months back one of the companies that insures our ski areas pulled out of Oregon, so that now only one insurer remains.

Legislation on this topic is sometimes perceived as the ski areas versus the trial attorneys. But myself, and our volunteers, and everyone that I talk to in the outdoor recreation community see this as a much bigger issue. This is about the survival of our outdoor recreation community and economy. And about keeping outdoor recreation as accessible and as affordable as possible, for everyone.

Our Oregon ski areas are currently experiencing great financial hardship, in part due to the huge cost increases for liability insurance, and exacerbated further by this year's snow drought. It is urgent that the Oregon Legislature take action.

During the 2025 legislative session, Senate Bill 1196 was under consideration to fix this issue, but never made it to a floor vote. That bill DID have strong bipartisan support.

This year two bills have been introduced - both with the stated purpose to fix Oregon's liability waiver problem:

- **Senate Bill 1593** - this bill (plus HB 4071) are what we need to align our liability waiver laws with other states. This bill has both bipartisan and bicameral support with a long list of individual sponsors, plus support from a large coalition of 150+ sports organizations including our ski areas. This bill will impact and fix the liability waiver situation for all Oregon sports organizations, resulting in a fair opportunity for plaintiffs to obtain redress when needed, but also allowing sports businesses and organizations a fair chance to make their case.
- **Senate Bill 1517** - this bill appears to be a half-measure on the liability waiver issue. It does not address any sports organizations other than ski areas, and it does not properly align Oregon's liability waiver laws with those of other western states. This bill is the wrong solution.

It is disturbing that SB 1517 is being addressed first, in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee today. If this bill is somehow passed, that will obviously hurt the chances of passage of SB 1593.

Our (300) members will be extremely disappointed in our legislature if this is the end result. Please reject SB 1517.

And please support SB 1593.

Thank you for your service to Oregon, your energy and dedication to our state are much appreciated.

Regards,



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