

Submitter:

Dave Slover

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1517

Formal Letter to the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee

Advocating for Small Business Liability Reform

February 5, 2026

Chairman Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR

Dear Chairman Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Esteemed Committee Members,

My name is Dave Slover, I am the owner of Alder Creek Kayak and Canoe. We are in Portland Oregon, and have kayak, canoe and SUP rental outposts in Lake Oswego and Tualatin. We are a small family-run business that has been in operation since 1986. Our business has served the local community for 40 years, providing outdoor recreation experiences, guided tours, rentals, youth programs and sales to well over 10,000 people a year. As a family-owned operation, we are deeply invested in the well-being of our neighbors and the vibrancy of our region.

Unfortunately, the current legal liability climate in Oregon has placed our business in a precarious position. Unenforceable liability waivers have left us vulnerable, and the resulting surge in insurance costs and availability threatens our continuing operations, our insurance rates have tripled in the past 5 years and we can currently find only one company that will cover us. These challenges are not unique to us—they affect hundreds of small businesses and nonprofits across the state, including outfitters, guides, trail organizations, climbing gyms, bike parks, and volunteer groups. We provide services and opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable if we were to leave the state or go out of business. As a requirement for providing service in Lake Oswego and Tualatin we are required to maintain liability insurance, without waiver reform, we will likely not be able to get insurance in the coming years.

I appreciate the intent behind SB 1517, but I must express concern that its scope is limited exclusively to ski areas. By addressing liability protections only for this narrow sector, SB 1517 ignores the broader crisis facing countless other small businesses and nonprofits. This approach not only distracts from meaningful reform but also leaves many organizations exposed to unsustainable risks.

I am writing to voice my strong support for the ORCA2026 act, which offers a comprehensive solution for the liability issues affecting small businesses and

nonprofits throughout Oregon. ORCA2026 represents the inclusive and effective reform our community urgently needs.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 1517 and instead lend your support to SB 1593 and HB 4701. These bills address the needs of a wider range of Oregon businesses and organizations, fostering a fairer and more sustainable legal environment for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further and am grateful for your service to our state.

Sincerely,
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