

Chairman Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Shane St. Clair, and I am the owner of Scovare Yachts, Inc., a small, family-run sailing and boat tour business that has proudly served the Portland region and surrounding waterways for more than two decades. We are a locally owned outfitter, employing Oregonians and operating largely in rural and river-dependent areas where outdoor recreation is not just a pastime, but a critical part of the local economy and culture.

Like many small outfitters, guides, and recreation providers across Oregon, we have been directly affected by the state's increasingly unworkable legal liability environment. The erosion of enforceable liability waivers has driven insurance costs sharply upward, reduced coverage availability, and introduced uncertainty that makes long-term planning increasingly difficult for small businesses like ours. For family-owned operations with modest margins, this situation is becoming unsustainable.

SB 1517 addresses this problem only for ski areas, leaving thousands of other small businesses and nonprofits exposed to the same legal and financial risks. Outfitters, guides, trail organizations, climbing gyms, bike parks, volunteer-led recreation groups, and many others face identical liability challenges, yet receive no relief under this bill. This narrow approach creates an uneven playing field and fails to address the systemic nature of the problem.

More concerning, SB 1517 distracts from and delays the comprehensive solution already before the legislature. I strongly support the ORCA2026 framework and the associated legislation—SB 1593 and HB 4701—which offer a fair, consistent, and broadly applicable approach to restoring reasonable liability protections for outdoor recreation providers across Oregon. These bills recognize that personal responsibility and informed assumption of risk are essential to the viability of outdoor recreation, particularly for small and rural operators.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 1517 and instead advance SB 1593 and HB 4701. Oregon's outdoor recreation economy depends on policies that support all providers, not just a single industry. A comprehensive, equitable solution will protect small businesses, preserve access to outdoor experiences, and ensure that Oregon remains a place where community-based recreation can thrive.

Sincerely,
Shane St. Clair
Owner, Scovare Yachts, Inc.