

Submitter: Kyle Drake
On Behalf Of: Arrowhead River Adventures
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

We are Kyle and Ashley Drake, the owners and operators of Arrowhead River Adventures. As a small, family-owned outfitting business, we take great pride in providing safe, educational, and transformative experiences on Oregon's rivers. We are writing to you today to express our strong opposition to SB 1517.

In short, Oregon is an outlier and SB 1517 fails small businesses. Since 2014, liability waivers have been effectively unenforceable in the state. Due to this we have experienced spiking insurance premiums to levels that threaten our livelihood. In response to this we have had to raise our costs. We primarily serve families, and these higher prices are making the outdoors less accessible for Oregonians.

SB 1517 focuses almost entirely on the ski industry. While ski areas are part of the same broader industry and are also in need of liability reform, this bill leaves the rest of Oregon's outdoor industry behind. This bill provides no legal clarity for other guided services including river outfitters, climbing guides, horsepackers, mountain bike operators, outdoor education programs, and conservation volunteers. By creating a carve-out for one sector, SB 1517 leaves small family businesses like ours exposed to the same litigation risks and skyrocketing insurance rates. Creating an uneven playing field where a few large operators are protected, but many of the small outfitters are ignored is unacceptable.

The worst part of the bill is Section 3.4, where the creation of a pay-to-play precedent establishes an effective outdoor recreation class system. By paying 10% more, a participant could opt-out of the waiver, creating another barrier to access for many. Furthermore, the 10% fee would not come close to covering the insurance, administrative, and litigation costs of such a system.

Please vote NO on SB 1517.

Do not pass a partial fix that leaves small businesses like Arrowhead River Adventures behind. We need comprehensive reform that protects ALL of Oregon's outdoor recreation economy.

Sincerely,
Kyle Drake & Ashley Drake
Owners, Arrowhead River Adventures