

Submitter: Chelsie Fisher
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

Chairman Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Chelsie Fisher. I serve as the General Manager of a small, locally owned lodge and outfitting business in rural Oregon, and I am writing to share my concerns regarding SB 1517.

From my position, liability policy is not theoretical. It shapes how we hire, insure, and make decisions about whether certain activities are even viable to offer. For small operations, particularly in rural communities, the lack of enforceable waivers has become a growing barrier to operating sustainably, even when safety protocols are strong and risks are clearly communicated.

SB 1517 proposes a narrowly tailored change that applies only to ski areas. While I understand the pressure that sector is under, creating an exception for a single industry does not resolve the broader instability facing Oregon's recreation economy. Many businesses and nonprofits operate under the same legal uncertainty, yet would remain unaffected by this bill.

I am concerned that this approach introduces further imbalance rather than clarity. It does not address rising insurance costs across sectors, nor does it offer a consistent framework that small, community-based operators can plan around. In practice, it risks favoring larger, well-resourced entities while leaving smaller operators to shoulder the same exposure they already face.

Oregon's outdoor economy is diverse and interconnected. Policy decisions that affect liability should reflect that reality. Broader proposals currently under consideration, including SB 1593 and HB 4701, better acknowledge the scope of the issue and offer a more equitable starting point for reform.

I respectfully urge the committee to consider the unintended consequences of SB 1517 and to focus instead on solutions that support stability, fairness, and responsible recreation statewide.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Chelsie Fisher
General Manager
Imperial River Company