

February 6, 2026

RE: Support for Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act (SB 1593)

Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Zach Collier, and I am the owner of Northwest Rafting Company. We are based in Hood River, Oregon, and operate multi-day rafting trips and instructional courses in both Oregon and Idaho. Our company employs 18 seasonal river guides and two full-time staff members. In addition to these jobs, we support rural communities by purchasing food, fuel, and supplies locally in the small towns near the public lands where we operate.

I am writing to express my strong support for the Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act of 2026 (ORCA), SB 1593.

Following the Oregon Supreme Court's decision in *Bagley v. Mt. Bachelor*, the outfitting and guiding industry has been placed in an extremely precarious position. Liability waivers (documents that clearly explain the inherent risks of outdoor recreation and allow participants to knowingly assume those risks) are now largely unenforceable in Oregon.

Our trips take place in natural, remote environments where inherent risk is unavoidable. In fact, many people choose these experiences precisely because they involve challenge, remoteness, and personal responsibility. There are well-documented physical, mental, and social benefits to spending time in wild places and engaging in activities that involve managed risk. We take great care to clearly explain those risks to our guests so they can make informed decisions about whether to participate. We also work hard to responsibly manage risk.

When these risk acknowledgment documents are no longer enforceable, it becomes increasingly difficult to operate legally and responsibly in Oregon. Insurance costs continue to rise, and the risk of a single lawsuit regardless of merit could force a small business like ours to close. Compounding this issue is the possibility that we may become unable to obtain liability insurance at all, which is a requirement for holding special use permits with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

Our industry is simply asking that Oregon align its policies with those of other Western states, including Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, where recreation liability waivers are enforceable for ordinary negligence.

Oregon is currently an outlier. Maintaining the status quo will result in fewer recreation opportunities for Oregonians, fewer visitors to our state, fewer outdoor recreation jobs, and reduced economic support for rural communities that rely on recreation-based tourism.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 1593. This legislation is critical to the future of my business, my employees, and the broader outdoor recreation economy in Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zach".

Zachary Collier
Owner/Outfitter
Northwest Rafting Company