

Submitter: Dana Turell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or SB1593
Topic:

Chair Meek and members of the committee,

My name is Dana Turell. I am a small business owner in Lane County and a longtime professional working at the intersection of tourism, arts and economic development. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 1593.

My work depends on a healthy visitor economy, and that economy depends on recreation. Across Lane County, especially in rural communities, recreation experiences are not an add-on. They are the reason people visit. Guided outdoor activities, recreation-based events and access to natural assets drive overnight stays, restaurant spending and local jobs.

In rural communities, the stakes are even higher. When a recreation provider is forced to scale back or close because they cannot secure affordable liability insurance, there is rarely an alternative. One lost operator can mean fewer visitors, fewer jobs and less revenue for an entire community. Those impacts are immediate and difficult to recover from.

The liability and insurance crisis facing recreation providers is already constraining what businesses can offer. SB 1593 is important because it begins to address the legal environment that contributes to this instability. Oregon is increasingly out of step with other western states that honor liability waivers for ordinary negligence. That misalignment places Oregon operators at a disadvantage and makes it harder for rural recreation businesses to compete and survive.

From the perspective of someone whose livelihood depends on tourism working as an economic engine, the measure of success for this bill is simple: it must meaningfully help stabilize the recreational insurance market. If providers remain unable to obtain affordable, reliable coverage, the visitor economy, particularly in rural areas, will continue to erode.

I also encourage continued work toward inclusion of parental waivers. Without addressing this gap, many recreation providers will remain exposed to significant risk, limiting the effectiveness of the reform and leaving key visitor experiences vulnerable.

A strong visitor economy requires that recreation providers can operate safely, responsibly and sustainably. SB 1593 is a necessary step toward protecting rural

communities, supporting local businesses and preserving the experiences that make Oregon a destination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Turell
Lane County