



SB 1593: Liability Protections for Recreation Operators

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

On behalf of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association – a business organization focused on coastal economic development and access to recreational opportunities enjoyed by both visitors and year-round residents – I am writing today to urge passage of SB 1193.

Access to recreational opportunities is a critical driver of tourism on the Oregon Coast – an industry that supports 25,000 jobs and brings \$2.3 billion in visitor spending in the region – and this bill will go a long way toward making coastal experiences more accessible for everyone.

I am not just a tourism professional; for years I ran a guide service near Tillamook. To offer these opportunities to experience our scenic wonders, it takes a lot of training, concern and costs. Insurance costs often force prices to be out of reach for too many would-be participants. This concern is a statewide issue. Currently only one insurance company will cover ski areas in the state. Without remedy to strengthen liability waivers, other outdoor activity businesses are bound to experience similar pressures.

From ski resorts in the mountains to coastal fishing outfitters, kayak guides and so many others, operators' livelihoods hinge on sharing and opening new worlds of recreation to people who might not otherwise have the opportunity. A trip fishing with a guide, or kayaking, can spark a lifelong passion that is healthy and positive. People take those memories home with them to cherish for the rest of their lives. The outdoor guide industry provides a safer means for getting started in these outdoor activities.

Our guides on the Oregon Coast are responsible. They do their best to make sure their customers have the safest experience possible. But no matter how diligent the guide is, there are inherent risks. Those who participate must understand that. It is unfair to hold the operator liable for a sudden wave or encounter with an animal. While providing protection, negligence and misconduct still will be actionable. SB 1593 provides a reasonable solution to an ongoing issue in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I urge you to pass SB 1593 to make outdoor recreation more affordable and accessible for everyone.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hinz, Executive Director

Oregon Coast Visitors Association