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

Supporting SB 1593 is not about "letting businesses off the hook"—it is about ensuring that the organizations providing the activities we love can afford to keep their doors open.

Three reasons I strongly support SB 1593:

1. Stopping the Insurance Crisis for Small Businesses

Currently, because liability waivers are so easily challenged in Oregon courts, insurance carriers are either hiking rates by triple digits or exiting the Oregon market entirely.

Impact on Non-profits: It isn't just ski resorts; it's youth climbing camps, rowing clubs, and community gyms. In Central Oregon, there are many companies who conduct outdoor and nature tours. Without SB 1593, these smaller, community-focused entities are the first to disappear because they cannot absorb the cost of "uninsurable" risk.

Leveling the Playing Field: SB 1593 brings Oregon in line with every other Western state, creating a predictable legal environment that invites insurers back to the state.

2. Preserving the "Inherent Risk" of Recreation

Recreation—whether it's rafting the Deschutes or skiing at Mt. Bachelor—comes with inherent risks. SB 1593 clarifies that while operators must be held to a standard of care, they should not be liable for the ordinary negligence that a participant voluntarily accepts when engaging in a risky sport. We all know that there risks associated with some outdoor activities - we agree to take part in them, even in light of these.

Accountability Remains: Crucially, SB 1593 does not protect operators from gross negligence, reckless conduct, or intentional harm. If an operator is truly dangerous, they are still liable.

3. Boosting the Rural and Tourism Economy

Oregon's economy relies on outdoor tourism. If outfitters, guides, and recreation hubs close down due to liability costs, rural communities that depend on that foot traffic will suffer.

Economic Stability: By passing SB 1593, the legislature signals that Oregon is "open

for business" for the recreation industry, protecting thousands of jobs across the state.