

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

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

I am writing in strong support of SB 1593, with an amendment to include youth waivers signed by a parent or legal guardian.

I submit this testimony as a lifelong outdoor recreationist, a former appointed citizen member of the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council, and as a professional in the outdoor industry. I snowboard regularly at Mt. Hood Meadows and Mt. Bachelor, and I serve as Director of Data & Analytics at Stio, a ski-first outdoor apparel company with a retail store in Bend. Oregon's recreation economy is central to both my livelihood and my quality of life.

Oregon's current position as an outlier among western states on waiver enforceability creates real harm. It increases costs and uncertainty for the small businesses, nonprofits, and recreation providers that make Oregon a destination for outdoor recreation and it does so without meaningfully improving safety outcomes. Every neighboring state enforces recreational liability waivers for ordinary negligence. Oregon should too.

SB 1593 strikes the right balance: it allows waivers for ordinary negligence while preserving full accountability for gross negligence. This is not about eliminating responsibility, it is about aligning Oregon with widely accepted standards that protect both participants and providers.

I also support Section 2's directive for the Oregon Business Development Department to study recreation commerce. As someone who works in data and analytics, I believe strongly that good policy starts with good data. Quantifying the economic impact of Oregon's recreation economy — the jobs, tax revenue, and community vitality it generates — will give this committee and future legislators the evidence base needed to make informed decisions.

Finally, I urge the committee to amend SB 1593 to include youth waivers signed by a parent or guardian. Families recreating together is foundational to Oregon's outdoor culture, and excluding minors from waiver protections creates an unnecessary gap that discourages providers from offering youth programming.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully,
Ethan Flory
Portland, Oregon