

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

Dear Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazen, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Patrick Addabbo, I am the Executive Director of Oregon Adaptive Sports (OAS), a nonprofit based in Bend that provides outdoor recreation opportunities, including skiing, cycling, and mountain biking, for people with disabilities, ages 4 to 94.

At Oregon Adaptive Sports we believe in the transformative power and irreplaceable benefits of outdoor recreation.

Our programs are led by trained instructors who hold nationally recognized certifications and over 300 dedicated volunteers. Many of our participants begin building their skills indoors at our facilities and then progress into the natural environment. This includes outdoor access experiences at Oregon's ski areas, as well as a vast array of non-skiing outdoor activities throughout the year in Central Oregon.

At the core of our mission is the dignity of risk, empowering individuals to gain independence and confidence through experiencing the great outdoors through adaptive sports. With many outdoor sports, reasonable and inherent risks are part of the learning process. Under the close guidance of trained instructors, our athletes progress safely and responsibly.

OAS programs are often central to the journey of an athlete who has acquired a disability, including those whose injury occurred while participating in one of these outdoor pursuits. Through experiences facilitated by OAS, we provide the opportunities for these athletes to gain and regain confidence, strengthen resilience, and build community.

Furthermore, critical to the impact of our organization is the sustainable operation and charitable support of our ski area and other recreation partners. If professionally managed recreation areas are forced to close due to legal and insurance hurdles, many OAS athletes will lose access to the outdoors entirely. OAS would simply not be able to operate and the barriers we work to remove to outdoor recreation would stand even taller. Hundreds of Oregonians with disabilities would lose their outlet to the outdoors and the innumerable and irreplaceable benefits of outdoor recreation.

Current Oregon law exposes organizations like ours and our partners to legal uncertainty and escalating insurance costs even when we act within industry standards and with informed consent from participants. We fully support holding providers accountable for gross negligence. But we need clarity when reasonable risk is acknowledged and taken in good faith.

OAS strongly supports SB 1593 (The Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act) and Section 2 of HB 4071 which seek to restore reasonable and commonly accepted waiver protections while maintaining accountability for gross negligence.

OAS strongly opposes SB 1517 which inconsistently delineates indoor vs outdoor components of recreation and fails to incorporate the often necessary continuum of indoor to outdoor activities which are critical to the safe and successful participation in outdoor pursuits.

Sincerely,

Pat Addabbo
Executive Director
Oregon Adaptive Sports