

Submitter: Dustin Paul
On Behalf Of: Sb 1593
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or SB1593
Topic:

Written Testimony in Support of SB 1593 – Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act (ORCA)

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

My name is Dustin Jeffrey Paul, and I am the owner of North Umpqua Outfitters, a veteran-owned guiding and outfitting business based on the North Umpqua River in rural Douglas County.

I strongly support the Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act of 2026 (ORCA) – SB 1593. Guiding is more than my livelihood—it is how I serve my community. Our trips bring people from across Oregon and beyond into small towns, supporting local restaurants, lodging, fuel stations, and seasonal jobs. Outdoor recreation is a cornerstone of our local economy and an important pathway for people—especially families and veterans—to connect with Oregon’s public lands in a safe, meaningful way.

Today, rising insurance premiums and growing legal uncertainty are placing extreme pressure on small recreation businesses like mine. Without a fix to Oregon’s recreation liability framework, many outfitters face the real risk of becoming uninsurable altogether. That threat doesn’t just impact business owners—it directly affects guides, employees, and the communities that rely on recreation tourism.

The current lack of enforceable liability waivers increases operating costs, drives insurance rates higher, suppresses wages, and ultimately limits access and affordability for the public. These costs are passed down to customers and make it harder for working families to participate in outdoor recreation.

ORCA is a simple, balanced, and proven solution. It aligns Oregon with every other Western state and the federal government—and restores a framework that Oregon itself used successfully in the past. This bill protects participants while providing reasonable clarity for recreation providers, ensuring Oregon remains competitive and accessible in the outdoor recreation economy. This alignment is critical for the long-term sustainability of our industry.

I also support the state conducting an economic study to better quantify the size and impact of Oregon’s outdoor recreation economy, which is already a major and

sustainable driver of rural economic development.

Thank you for championing SB 1593 and for recognizing the importance of outdoor recreation to Oregon's economy and quality of life. I appreciate your leadership and look forward to continuing to help people safely enjoy Oregon's incredible outdoors.

Respectfully,
Dustin Jeffrey Paul
Owner, North Umpqua Outfitters