

Regarding ORCA – SB1593

2/5/26

To Chairman Mark Meek, Vice Chair Drazan and members of the committee

Oregon State Legislature

From Shelley Sperr Hakanson, Wy'East Nordic Ski School

My name is Shelley Sperr Hakanson. For 50 years I have run my business, Wy'East Nordic, on the slopes of Mt. Hood. I teach cross country skiing, telemark classes, backcountry touring and outdoor safety education classes to the general public, sponsored groups like Boy Scouts, church groups, Lewis and Clark College and other community college groups. I also teach instructor certification workshops for groups like the Mazamas and Oregon Nordic Club. I am involved with the Washington School for the Blind to teach their students how to ski- this is an 18 year old program.

As an outfitter in the State of Oregon, teaching on the Mt. Hood National Forest, I am required to have the following;

**A special use permit** through the USDA Forest Service. This requires Forest approval, a yearly operating and safety plan, **\$5,000,000 minimum in liability insurance indemnifying the FS, the State of Oregon and other operators I use**, first aid training and accredited training and an Oregon Outfitter/Guide license.

**Oregon Outfitter license**- this requires proof of insurance, FS permit, First Aid training and payment of the state licensing fee. That fee went from \$150 in 2025 to \$350 in 2026 (!!!!!).

**Current certification** through the Professional Ski Instructors of America/NW (PSIA/NW) which involves attending on snow training and payments of national and regional ski school fees. In the past, I was able to secure group plan insurance through PSIA/NW. Safehold Insurance was the underwriter.

I was notified in May 2025, that I would no longer have Safehold Insurance because of their withdrawal from the State of Oregon due to the liability/waiver issues. I was not able to secure other insurance for this season.

**I AM NOT OPERATING MY SKI SCHOOL THIS WINTER BECAUSE OF THE INABILITY TO SECURE INSURANCE.**

I was able to get an insurance quote from out of state that was 4X the amount I was paying. I would have also had the added cost of an attorney to try to write an adequate release.

**My decision not to operate is solely because of the cost and lack of insurance for my school.**

I have been teaching skiing since 1967. I teach because I love it. To see little kids start to ski and know they will have a life long sport to enjoy, or to see families out doing a sport together that has minimal costs associated with it has been my satisfaction for many seasons.

Oregon is known for outdoor recreation. The ORCA Bill 1593 is well thought out, concise and equitable and can address the needs of ALL outfitter groups. It is not just the large ski areas that are important, it is also the businesses that help support their bottom line. For example, my school uses the lifts at Timberline and Summit Pass. Those students pay full price tickets, eat full price food and may stay at the Lodge for accommodation. Those students may also rent skis from local shops, buy merchandise, pay ODOT SnoPark fees, eat at local restaurants and stay at other VRBO type of lodging supporting our local Mt. Hood economy.

Let's take an approach that most other states (Washington, California, Idaho and Montana for example) use for insurance liability and bring Oregon in line with a solid plan.

Thank you for your work with this incredibly important issue. The livelihood of many businesses depends on you to make the right, all encompassing decision for the future of Oregon recreation opportunities.

Let's go skiing!!!!

Thank you and very sincerely,

Shelley Sperr Hakanson

Wy'East Nordic