

Submitter: Jennifer Ward
On Behalf Of: City of Dallas
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1517

Chair Bowman and Members of the House Rules Committee,

My name is Jennifer Ward and I serve as the Public Works Director for the City of Dallas. In addition to maintaining the city's transportation and utilities infrastructure, our department provides recreational opportunities through our Parks and Aquatics divisions to approximately 18,000 Dallas residents, residents of neighboring communities and those who visit our community. These recreational opportunities include summer camps, tennis, pickleball, disc golf, skateboarding, creekside trails, swim teams, recreational swims and land and aquatic fitness classes.

We respectfully oppose SB 1517A as written. While we strongly support efforts to improve recreational liability laws in Oregon, the current version of SB 1517 contains ambiguities and exceptions that create uncertainty and represent a step backward in the effort to protect recreation providers and the communities we serve.

Our agency has supported SB 1593 and the protections it provides. We believe the framework reflected in the -A11 amendments to SB 1517 achieves those same protections in a clearer and more workable manner, and we support adoption of those amendments.

We also recognize and appreciate the significant work that has gone into seeking compromise on this issue. In that spirit, we are agreeable to supporting the -A15 amendments, understanding that while they may not include every preferred protection, they move the policy forward and provide broader applicability of waivers and greater certainty for local parks and recreation providers across Oregon.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to this complex issue and hope that adoption of the compromise amendments will provide clarity and a practical path forward.

Thank you for your time and public service.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Ward
Public Works Director
City of Dallas