



From the Offices of Governor Kotek; Representatives Levy, Wallan, Kropf, Helfrich

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Legislature Moves Forward With Bipartisan Solution to Protect Recreators, Oregon Outdoor Industry

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon House passed [SB 1517](#), a bipartisan measure that reflects years of collaboration among community leaders, recreation providers, small businesses, and families from every corner of our state. Oregon’s identity is rooted in the outdoors. From our mountains and rivers to our trails, fields, and gyms, recreation is more than a pastime, it’s part of who we are. SB 1517 honors that legacy.

“From rafting and climbing to hiking and hunting, outdoor recreation fuels our local economies and our way of life,” said **Rep. Levy** (D - Bend, South Redmond, Tumalo & Sisters). “By improving liability protections, we’re helping preserve access to insurance so these businesses can keep serving Oregonians and visitors alike.”

“I’m proud we finally achieved this thoughtful, bipartisan solution to a problem that threatened to shutter Oregon’s recreation industry. We restored predictability while protecting jobs and small businesses so families and visitors can continue to hike, ski, and play here,” added **Rep. Wallan** (R - Medford).

This legislation provides clarity and balance for Oregon’s recreation and fitness providers while preserving important protections for participants. It ensures that adults who choose to participate in sports and recreational activities can knowingly accept the inherent risks of those activities, while maintaining strong accountability for gross negligence, reckless conduct, safety violations, and misconduct.

This bill does not eliminate responsibility. It reinforces it by clearly outlining what can and cannot be waived, and protecting Oregonians from unsafe practices.

“Oregon’s unmatched outdoor recreation is a major reason people love living here, myself included,” said **Rep. Kropf** (D - Bend). “This legislation supports the businesses and operators who power that industry while establishing clear, workable safety standards.”

“This legislation demonstrates what we can accomplish when we work together and keep our priorities centered on the people we serve,” said **Rep. Helfrich** (R - Hood River). “I’m pleased we took steps to protect a \$17 billion industry, and helped ensure Oregon’s recreational industry remains available and affordable to all Oregonians.”

For years, recreation providers across Oregon – from small-town outfitters to community sports programs – have faced uncertainty that has made it harder to operate and serve families. That uncertainty has impacted jobs, youth programs, tourism, and local economies. SB 1517 provides clarity so these businesses and organizations can continue offering safe, meaningful opportunities for Oregonians to stay active and connected.

“On behalf of Mt. Bachelor and Sun Country Tours, I want to express my gratitude to Rep. Emerson Levy and the Oregon legislature for their hard-fought work towards a solid compromise on waiver reform. This legislation not only strengthens Oregon’s recreation landscape but we believe it will also provide much-needed stability in the insurance market for operators,” said **John Merriman, President & General Manager of Mt. Bachelor**. “As we move forward, we are eager to collaborate with lawmakers and the broader community to implement these changes. Together, we can continue to enhance outdoor access to the best skiing experience in the world.”

Importantly, this legislation is the product of bipartisan work and broad stakeholder engagement. Lawmakers from both parties worked alongside industry representatives, trial attorneys, consumer advocates, and community members to strike a careful and thoughtful balance. The result is a bill that reflects Oregon values: fairness, personal responsibility, public safety, and strong local communities.

“Oregonians and visitors enjoy all the opportunities our state provides to be outside and recreate in all kinds of ways. I’m pleased legislators and advocates could hammer out a deal,” said **Gov. Tina Kotek**. “The bill strikes a balance that protects the ability of people to enjoy incredible places and have amazing experiences while giving outdoor recreation businesses the certainty they need to operate and grow.”

With House passage, SB 1517 will now return to the Senate for concurrence before heading to the Governor’s desk.

As the bill advances, supporters remain committed to ensuring Oregon continues to be a place where families can safely ski, hike, climb, ride, compete, and explore, and where the small businesses and community organizations that make those experiences possible can thrive.

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