



South Dakota Campground Owners Association (SDCOA)

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Executive Director, Mary Arlington

For Immediate Release

February 21, 2020

South Dakota Bill Seeks to Establish Immunity from Liability for the Inherent Risks of Camping

Pierre SD – The South Dakota Campground Owners Association (SDCOA) will speak on Monday, February 24th, as a proponent for a legislative bill its members requested to establish immunity from liability for the inherent risks of camping.

Executive Director Mary Arlington explains, “We aren’t talking about negligence. Camping is known to expose people to uneven natural terrain where tree roots cause a trip hazard and bees can perhaps sting you. The bill addresses the inherent risks of camping and protects the owners of privately owned campgrounds from such lawsuits.”

Jeff Sims, Senior Director of State Relations & Advocacy of the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC), says, “The very qualities campground guests seek in the outdoors come with an element of risk. When they use fire pits on their campsites, they create the risk of burns. When the campsite paths are not lighted at night, they create the risk of a stumble.”

Sims adds, “Our members are professionals. They provide jobs to others and are a source of economic growth. They can grow their businesses with reasonable, common sense protection from frivolous lawsuits.”

Arlington explains, “The need for the bill was discussed at the May 2019 meeting of the members. Representative Tim Goodwin (District 30/Rapid City) was in attendance and agreed to author the bill.

We supplied him with information about a similar bill which passed in Wisconsin in 2015, and other documents we requested from Sims.

The bill was introduced in January and was shared with the Visitor Alliance Industry and the Department of Tourism. Presently, the Legislative Research Council shows 13 state legislators support the bill.”

SDCOA wants owners of South Dakota campgrounds and others in the tourism industry to request support of the bill by their legislators, especially those who sit on the House Judiciary Committee, before Monday morning’s hearing.

We’re asking for support of SD HB 1121, a bill that isn’t seeking immunity from negligence, but rather from inherent risks that come with being outdoors, in nature beyond the operator’s control. We are wanting protection for our campground owners that Wisconsin has provided to its campground owners.

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. CT, in Room 413. “Supporters are encouraged to attend. You may contact SDCOA for assistance on how to reach the legislators or how to phrase your support,” says Arlington.

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MORE ON THE BILL

- The bill itself can be [read by clicking here.](#)
- You can [see more on the history by clicking here.](#)

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JPGS ATTACHED TO EMAIL



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