

## HB 4146 Testimony

Chair Barnhart, members of the committee I'm Vince Porter, the Governor's policy advisor on Jobs and the Economy. I wanted to come and provide some background on how we got to this hearing and this proposal. In July of 2014 the team at TrackTown USA contacted me after they met with Governor Kitzhaber to inform him of their intention to bid for the 2019 World Track and Field Championships, one of the most significant international sporting events in the world. Many of us saw this bid as a once in a lifetime opportunity for Oregon and as a result, worked to come up with solutions to support the bid. This event has never been hosted in the United States, and most recently was hosted by Beijing in 2015. In 2017, the games will be held in London – another great international city. It may sound crazy to consider any city in Oregon at the same level as these two metropolises, but when you realize that the sport of track and field is so deeply ingrained in our history and DNA, it feels only appropriate that Eugene, Oregon would one day host the World Track and Field Championships. There is simply no other place in the world that I know of as deeply connected to the sport.

Unfortunately in October of 2014 the IAAF committee selected Doha, Qatar as the host city for the 2019 games. While we did not win the 2019 bid, Eugene was awarded the 2021 Championships in April of 2015. This award was a huge victory for the state and I know the Governor is excited about the unique and positive impact this event will have on Oregon.

Along the way, I have had many conversations with TrackTown and the University of Oregon about the pathway to obtaining adequate support from the state to help make the 2021 games a success. We have always been very clear that any final plan must include the authorization of the legislature and we have worked with many legislators - most notably Rep. Nathanson on ideas. I would like to thank Rep. Nathanson for her leadership and determination to bring this bill before this committee.

One focus we've had while discussing options for support is the desire to avoid proposing a large general fund or lottery fund option. In very short order we worked with Rep. Nathanson, Travel Oregon, and the Oregon Restaurant Lodging Association to develop a plan. The conversations quickly led all of us to consider alternative funding streams, which in turn led us to a discussion about raising the statewide lodging tax from 1% to 2%.

This became the most compelling plan because it did more than just create a necessary funding stream for one event. This proposal:

- Collects 75% of the funds raised from out of state.
- The increased funding will make a statewide impact and more than just one event in Eugene.

- It has the support of the industry association who will be most affected by the increase.

I know there has been much reported about this proposal as well as the Track championships. And there have been a lot of discussions with various stakeholders. All of the conversations I have had have been good honest discussions with the upmost of integrity. Every conversation has been focused on what we all want, more opportunity and economic development for Oregon on a national and international scale.

I'm sure the rest of the hearing will provide more important information for all of you to consider so I'll conclude my testimony and answer any questions you may have.