

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager  
In Support of Senate Bill 978 -1, Sections 26-29  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
April 2, 2019**



Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

As you know, Metro is the elected regional government that serves more than 1.5 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Upwards of 3 million people every year, including many families, visit the Oregon Zoo, the Oregon Convention Center, Blue Lake Park and other venues we own and/or operate on behalf of the people of the region. Metro has struggled for years to balance the legitimate rights of gun owners with the safety and comfort of the broader public in a dense urban environment. While most gun owners are considerate and cooperative, occasionally we have a problem with a concealed handgun license holder who insists on open carrying in a crowded public space (e.g., at the zoo) among families who have gathered for stress-free recreation. We have received many complaints about such activity but lack sufficient authority to address these incidents on our own properties.

Either by oversight or because many laws predate our existence, Metro is sometimes omitted from statutes that cover cities and counties. Such has been the case with some of the statutes that address firearm regulation. Moreover, the somewhat confusing definition of “public building” in ORS 166.360 has created uncertainty about exactly what buildings (or portions of buildings) are included, and when the grounds around the building are included. This is especially important with respect to places like the zoo, where most visitors are not in buildings. Amending this definition per Sec. 27 of the -1 amendment will provide needed clarity. Along with the ability to regulate concealed weapons provided in Sec. 26 of the amendment, this will enable the Metro Council to consider prudent steps to regulate the carrying of firearms on Metro properties.

One of the Metro Council’s adopted principles that guides Metro’s legislative advocacy reads:

**Firearms and Public Facilities:** Metro supports legislation that increases Metro’s authority to regulate the carrying of firearms on Metro properties and public venues, and opposes legislation that limits or reduces that authority.

Sections 26-29 of the -1 amendment to SB 978 support this principle. We urge you to amend those sections into the bill and move it forward.

Thank you very much for considering these comments.