



May 3, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Eugene Letter of Support for Lane County Multi-Use Events Center

Senator Steiner and Representative Sanchez:

The City of Eugene supports keeping the Eugene Emeralds baseball team in Eugene by securing a long-term location at a new Lane Events Multi-Use Event Center.

The Eugene Emeralds were established in Eugene 68 years ago (1955), and are currently affiliated with the San Francisco Giants Major League Baseball (MLB) team. In 2020, the Emeralds were moved up to the High-A minor league baseball classification (previously Short-A), extending their season from April thru September (~132 games). The previous Short-A season was ~76 games from June thru early September. The Emeralds have played at PK Park (UO baseball stadium) since 2010, sharing the facility with the UO baseball program. With the extension of the Emeralds season, ongoing conflicts with the overlapping Emeralds/UO baseball seasons, and new MLB standards for minor league facilities (PK Park does not meet current standards for locker rooms, training facilities, lighting, etc), the UO is discontinuing the contract for the Emeralds use of PK Park at the end of the current Emeralds season.

The Emeralds have been working with Lane County to build a new publicly owned multi-use stadium at the Lane County Fairgrounds that would become the new home for the Emeralds. The State Legislature previously awarded \$7.5 million in support of the new facility and now Lane County and the Emeralds are seeking an additional \$7.5 million. The Lane County Commissioners voted last year to increase the local Transient Room Tax to provide additional funds to support the project and continues to work with other local and regional partners to identify the remaining financing to fill the gap for the project.

The Emeralds organization has been a tremendous asset to our local community, as a generator of many positive economic returns, supporting local non-profits to raise funds, employing local community members (particularly youth), and supporting youth programs in the community. Please support Lane County's request for funding to build a new Multi-Use Event Center.

Sincerely,

Lucy Vinis
Eugene Mayor