

Submitter: KL Wombacher

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital  
Construction

Measure: HB5201

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Tens of thousands of people attend Hops games every season. And yet, only a handful of diehards can actually tell you the final score when they leave the ballpark. That's because minor league baseball -- and this team -- isn't about wins and losses: it's about the shared experience of sitting with your friends and neighbors on a summer evening, and coming together no matter your economic status or ethnicity. Over the past ten years, the Hops have grown into a beloved staple of Hillsboro. Yet, we now find ourselves at a critical juncture: without a new ballpark, our team will be forced to find a new home in 2025. To put it in baseball terms, it's the bottom of the ninth inning, and we're down to our final strike.

We've turned over every rock to fully-fund this project. The majority of funds -- \$82 million -- are coming from our owners in the form of bond financing, and we're incredibly proud of this fact. They are invested in keeping the Hops in Hillsboro for a long, long time, courtesy of a spectacular new ballpark that will be owned by the city. We're also blessed by the generous support of our city, county, and local business and community partners. Building this new stadium has been a team sport every step of the way.

There is a strong economic rationale I can give you for why Oregon should invest in the Hops, and how this investment will be a net positive revenue generator for the state over the majority of the leases' lifetime.

But I strongly believe the most compelling reason for your support is to ensure the Hops will continue as a central force of pride and gathering across Hillsboro and Greater Portland.

We need events and causes that bring us together -- that's what ballparks do, that's what sports teams do, and that's why they're so vital to the health of our communities.

This new ballpark will be Hillsboro's living room: it's where we'll come together for baseball games, youth sports, concerts, and multi-cultural events.

The Hops have long been here for us, but now we need your vote to ensure this team can continue to be here for Hillsboro and Oregon for decades to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.