



100 SW Market St, Suite 200 • Portland, OR 97201 • 503-544-2792
info@friendsofbaseball.org • www.friendsofbaseball.org • Tax ID: 20-3888216

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
Re: SB 110

March, 2025

Dear Chair Meek, Vice-Chair McLane and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Aaron Dickson, and I am the Executive Director of Friends of Baseball (FOB), a Portland-based nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the lives of children through the power of sports. We use baseball and softball as tools to engage, inspire, and empower youth and families in underserved communities. I'm here to speak in support of SB 110.

For the past 20 years, FOB has been serving the Portland metro area and has assisted over 50,000 young people to reach their full potential. We offer after-school enrichment, summer camps, coach and leadership training, and sports skills development.

A Major League Baseball (MLB) team in Portland will serve as a powerful catalyst for expansive impact within our community. It will inspire the next generation of major league players in this region and more importantly, the next generation of major league citizens. The impact of an MLB team extends far beyond entertainment; it serves as a tool for uplifting communities, driving lasting positive change, and fostering a sense of pride.

MLB teams become integral to their communities, offering significant economic impact and social investment. They bring philanthropy, education, youth development, and local outreach efforts, all of which contribute to the vibrancy of local communities. Currently, Friends of Baseball is the only officially recognized MLB community partner in Oregon, but our capacity is limited. With an MLB Foundation, we could scale our efforts and extend our reach to more youth in need.

An MLB team in Portland would offer substantial opportunities to create and expand relationships with national and local organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Stand Up to Cancer, the Jackie Robinson Foundation, and the Nike RBI Initiative. The philanthropic work of MLB emphasizes equity, youth access to sports, and building healthier, more vibrant communities.

Through our partnership with the Seattle Mariners, FOB has taken hundreds of local youth on exposure trips, including a 6-hour bus ride to T-Mobile Park. For many of these youth, this was their first experience at a Major League ballpark—and for some, their first time leaving the city limits. These trips are transformative, offering youth a new vision for their futures and expanding their horizons. The presence of an MLB team in Portland would provide countless more opportunities like this, encouraging youth to dream big and see that anything is possible.

Supporting the Portland Diamond Project is critical, because Portland doesn't just need a baseball team—it needs a community partner that will invest in its people, uplift its youth, and provide a field of dreams and opportunities for families. An MLB team in Portland will be an investment in the future of our city and state, and it will have a

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transformative effect on the children and families we serve. We believe that the presence of an MLB team will help unlock new doors for growth and opportunity in Portland, particularly in underserved communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

#SwingForTheFences

Aaron Dickson
Executive Director
Friends of Baseball

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