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Written Testimony in Support of SB 1501**Submitted to the Senate Committee on Rules****By Jim Etzel, Executive Director****On behalf of Sport Oregon****Position: Support**

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Etzel, and I am the CEO of Sport Oregon, the state's non-profit sports commission. I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 1501.

Sport Oregon exists to drive economic activity through sports and major events for the entire state of Oregon. Our work is not confined to Portland, although we continue to drive significant impact to our state's largest city. The benefits Oregon receives from hosting major events only materialize because we can attract those events to the state in the first place.

Sport Oregon Is Statewide — and the Impacts Are Statewide

Major sporting events and concerts are powerful entry points into Oregon's visitor economy. Visitors who come for a tournament, playoff game, or concert routinely extend their trips beyond the metro area to our crown jewels of Central Oregon, the Oregon Coast, Southern Oregon, and Eastern Oregon.

Those extended trips translate directly into additional hotel nights outside Portland, rental car and fuel purchases, meals and retail spending in smaller communities, with repeat visitation.

Without competitive, large-scale events drawing visitors into Oregon, many of these downstream economic benefits simply do not occur. From a statewide perspective, the Moda Center functions as a front door to Oregon's broader tourism economy.

The Moda Center Is Statewide Economic Infrastructure

The Moda Center is not just a professional basketball venue. It is a core piece of economic infrastructure that allows Oregon to compete for events that require modern, world-class facilities, including:

- NCAA tournament games and playoff rounds
- National and international sporting competitions
- Olympic trials and qualifying events
- Major concert tours and cultural events
- Emerging professional sports, including women's leagues such as the WNBA

These events are not one-night transactions. They can generate three- to four-night hotel stays, often mid-week, and produce off-site spending that benefits communities across Oregon, not just the host city. Without a competitive arena, Oregon is not simply passed over for these opportunities; it is removed from consideration entirely, possibly for decades.

A Connected Sports Ecosystem Is at Risk

A modern arena supports an entire sports ecosystem, including women's professional sports, collegiate athletics, amateur competitions, and emerging leagues that rely on shared infrastructure, partnerships, and credibility.

When that foundation erodes, the consequences are immediate and compounding. Events move elsewhere. Partnerships weaken. Expansion opportunities disappear. Once Oregon is no longer viewed as a reliable host state, rebuilding that reputation is extraordinarily difficult.

Broader Economic Consequences for Oregon

Oregon is a global leader in sports apparel, footwear, and innovation. Companies that anchor these industries compete nationally and internationally for talent. Access to major sports and cultural events plays a meaningful role in recruitment and retention decisions, particularly for senior talent and mobile workforces.

These quality-of-life assets are often taken for granted until they begin to disappear. Maintaining competitive venues is part of sustaining Oregon's economic position across sectors.

SB 1501 Is a Prudent and Responsible Investment

SB 1501 does not create new taxes. It reinvests revenue already generated by players, performers, and staff back into the facility that makes these statewide economic benefits possible.

From Sport Oregon's perspective, this is a practical, self-sustaining approach to preserving an asset that supports tourism, small businesses, workforce attraction, and economic activity across urban and rural Oregon alike.

Conclusion

SB 1501 should be understood as an investment in Oregon's statewide sports economy and visitor infrastructure, not as a bill about a single team or a single city.

Protecting the Moda Center's competitiveness protects Oregon's ability to attract events, visitors, and investment now and into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of SB 1501.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Etzel
CEO, Sport Oregon