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Date: February 11, 2026

To: Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules

From: Scott Bruun, Oregon Bankers Association

RE: Testimony in support of SB 1501 / Portland Trail Blazers

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Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Bruun, and I am the President and CEO of the Oregon Bankers Association and the Community Banks of Oregon. Together, we represent the FDIC-insured banks and trust companies operating in Oregon.

We are submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1501. We do so because, at its core, SB 1501 is about keeping the Portland Trail Blazers in Oregon.

The Trail Blazers are an Oregon icon. For more than 50 years, they have been a source of shared identity, civic pride, and community connection across our state. Many Oregonians remember exactly where they were on June 5, 1977, when Bill Walton tipped away the final missed shot and the Blazers won the NBA Championship. Today, new generations of families carry that same passion and loyalty for a team that has become woven into the fabric of Oregon life.

Losing the Blazers, which is a very real risk without this legislative action, would devastate Portland and communities around our state. At a time when Portland's sense of community pride has been tested by a decade of well-documented challenges, the Blazers remain a unifying force that brings people together across neighborhoods, backgrounds, and generations.

The economic consequences would be equally severe. Losing the team would mean lost jobs, reduced travel and tourism, harm to small businesses, declining property values, and reduced local and state revenues. For banks of all sizes, this would translate into fewer opportunities to lend, invest, and support economic growth in Portland and throughout Oregon.

Importantly, this outcome is avoidable.

SB 1501 offers a straightforward and proven approach. Similar frameworks have been used successfully in other cities to retain or attract professional sports teams. The concept mirrors legislation this body overwhelmingly passed last year to support the potential development of a Major League Baseball team in Portland. Just as importantly, SB 1501 is designed to protect Oregon taxpayers.

This bill provides a path to ensure that the Portland Trail Blazers—an institution central to Oregon's cultural, social, and economic life—remain where they belong. We respectfully urge your support for SB 1501.

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