

# TRAVEL PORTLAND

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February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Senate Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 1501

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-chair Starr and honored members of the committee,

As the President and CEO of Travel Portland, I am writing to express my strong support for SB 1501. Travel Portland is the destination marketing organization for Oregon's largest city, and our mission is to generate travel demand that drives economic impact for Portland. We promote our destination for leisure travel, as an exceptional location to host conventions, conferences and other large groups, and as a compelling offering in travel trade itineraries for major tour operators from around the world.

Without a doubt, Moda Center is one of our single most impactful, year-round assets for drawing leisure, business and convention travel to our region. You have an opportunity to ensure this critical driver of economic impact and vitality continues as a gathering place for residents and visitors for years to come.

When looked at through a tourism lens, there's a lot more to this story than basketball. While economic vibrancy is at stake, this also is a pivotal moment for Portland's reputation and how our elected leaders signal to Portlanders and Oregonians that our city and Oregon's largest arena are worthy of investment. Beyond the infrastructure upgrades impacting our franchises, a reimaged Moda will be able to attract the world's premier arena tours.

Whether it's basketball; concerts ranging from Stevie Nicks to Sabrina Carpenter; family friendly events like a rodeo or a monster truck jam; large business meetings; or community events that celebrate the diversity of our state – every single Moda Center event has a significant impact on Oregon and its economy. Take in for a moment the radius of fans and ticket buyers the Moda Center draws from:

- The Blazers are the only NBA team north of Sacramento, meaning we are the closest NBA market for neighboring states like Idaho and Washington as well as fans in Montana and British Columbia.
- The nearest WNBA market is Seattle. You may think that means Washingtonians won't come, but we know WNBA fans travel, and the proximity is prime for building a strong rivalry corridor up and down I-5.

- As the largest concert venue in the state, Moda draws music lovers from surrounding states and every corner of Oregon.

Arenas serve as social hubs, drawing audiences throughout the year. The vibrancy brought by the franchise and every event held at the Moda Center is absolutely essential for a healthy, urban economy. Fans and event attendees activate the neighborhood and the entire city, visiting restaurants, bars, and small businesses. They often build multi-day visits around the opportunity to see their favorite performers and athletes.

There is no question that Moda Center is one of the single largest multipliers for our tourism economy. In 2024, twenty-six Blazer games coincided with conventions that booked more than 1,000 rooms on the same night. When leisure bookings overlap with convention business it creates compression in the market, increasing revenues. In some cases, these nights increased hotel occupancy by more than 20 percentage points.

2024 also saw twenty-eight Moda Center event nights that drove hotel occupancy in the city above 75%. By comparison, the average hotel occupancy for the year was just above 60%. Imagine how a new, modern Moda Center experience could help drive attendance and visitor spend and play a premiere role in the renaissance of our city.

To have this conversation, we must also examine what is at risk without investment: Portland's and Oregon's reputations are still fragile. Since 2018, we have been monitoring national consumer sentiment toward Portland as a destination. We know all too well the spikes in negative sentiment that occur every time Portland is at the center of yet another negative news cycle.

Fortunately, momentum is on our side. Local pride has been on the increase and our sentiment data show that attitudes and perception toward our city are improving. Now it is the legislature's turn to lean in to make this transformative investment in a marquee asset that sits in a prime location in the heart of our city. An arena and team that are worthy of our city, our state and our visitors. Portlanders and Oregonians deserve nothing less.

Thank you for supporting SB 1501.

Sincerely,



Megan Conway  
President & CEO