



## **SB 1501 – Still Opposing massive funds for the Moda Center**

Senate Rules Committee –Jody Wiser – 2.25.2026

Chair Jama and fellow committee members,

I'm Jody Wiser speaking for Tax Fairness Oregon, a network of volunteers who advocate for a rational and equitable tax code. And we oppose Senate Bill 1501, even with the amendment.

While the amendment is an improvement, it allocates roughly \$17 million a year to a single cultural facility and the activities happening there. How about \$2 million instead?

What, in an average year, does the legislature spent in total on the cultural life of this state? For fairgrounds, the High Desert Museum, the Shakespeare Festival, Artist Repertory Theater's new digs, the Historical Society, the Cultural Trust, the Portland Art Museum. . . .

We rightly support both new facilities and ongoing operations of the experiences that bind communities together.

But please look at what the totals are for other cultural institutions and other state services before committing such a huge annual amount to this one building and its anchor tenant. I hope Senator Wagner will submit for the record his list of what we invest in similar cultural experiences.

How does this \$17 million a year compare to what we spend on Kid's Credits? It's 40% of what we have committed to families with young children.

The Hops Stadium, was a one-time \$15 million give, not a continuing one for 20 years.

Even with Intel, we return only 50% of the income taxes of the employees to the county, with a maximum of \$16 million, not 100% and \$17 million. We cannot believe that a clear-eyed legislature that stopped and compared this commitment to others would count the Trailblazers as an asset equal to Intel.

Paul Allen and his estate turned a \$100 million investment in the Trailblazers into a \$4 billion asset. Has anyone asked Jody Allen to have the estate contribute to the stadium's upgrade?

Like last year's approved Portland Diamond bill, legislators will most likely approve this bill in support of the new Trail Blazers' billionaire owner.

But we want you to clearly understand what your actions mean. You are asking performers to pay their taxes to the boss rather than support the services of this state. And \$350 million is a huge amount of money.

The bill doesn't include new money. This is money that otherwise would go into the General Fund that pays core services: K-12 education, human services, public safety, the courts, and the state debt service. Thus redirecting and reducing General Funds has the effect of negatively impacting all Oregonians.

The investor, after spending over \$4 billion, seems unwilling to invest a few hundred million in renovation dollars. Thus Oregonians, especially the poor, will be paying for what otherwise should be the owners' financial responsibility.

In closing, while approving this bill may seem justified to sports fans and major concert goers, this bill demands that Oregonians participate in the practice of taking from the poor and giving to the rich to an inordinate degree. And you are making a commitment that will bind future legislatures to this figure.

Thank you for hearing our objections.

***We read the bills and follow the money***