

Testimony of Metro Council President Lynn Peterson

Support on SB 1501

Senate Committee on Rules

February 11, 2026



Metro has a variety of responsibilities, and one of them is operating some of our region's most important shared spaces, including the Oregon Zoo, the Oregon Convention Center and the Portland Expo Center.

We know how important it is to have high-quality, well-maintained facilities to support the comfort of visitors and maintain our competitive status as a city to do business in, to visit, to learn from – and to have fun in.

That's why I'm here today to offer my full support of the proposed Moda Center renovations.

The Portland region needs wins. And while the Blazers have been exceeding expectations this year on the court, no win is as important as the bills you are considering to renovate the Moda Center.

Every year, more than 700,000 visitors enter the Moda Center to watch NBA basketball. That's 41 nights of people coming to the central city to share in our common joy.

And the Moda Center is about more than just the NBA. It draws national events as well.

As operators of the Oregon Convention Center, we know how important it is to have a world-class facility welcoming visitors to Portland. It creates a lasting impression that demonstrates our commitment to investing in ourselves – a commitment that is then reflected in the willingness of people to visit again, or even, perhaps, start or expand a business here.

That's why the city, region and state have invested so much into attracting the 2030 NCAA Womens Final Four to Portland.

This event is important for its direct impacts– the past two Womens Final Four events, in Cleveland and Tampa, each prompted more than \$30 million in direct spending over the course of the event.

But it's also important for its lasting impressions.

Last week, the San Francisco Bay area hosted the Super Bowl. And one of the top stories was how surprised visitors were to find that San Francisco was... not nearly as bad as the national media had portrayed it to be.

As we work to combat negative messages and get our economy humming again, events like the 2030 Final Four, and hopefully hosting an NBA All Star Game, are key to breaking down those barriers.

Losing the Blazers cannot be an option. The last time a U.S. city disappeared from the map of Big 4 sports teams, it was Hartford, Connecticut, in 1996. Before that, it was Syracuse, New York, in 1963.

This is also important for the thousands of Oregonian whose livelihoods depend on the Moda Center.

On an NBA game day, more than 1,200 people go to work at the Moda Center. From ushers to broadcasters to athletes to coaches to performance staff to entertainment staff to concession sellers, each NBA game represents a night of work – 41 through the course of the year.

I urge you to move forward with an important investment in one of our state's most prominent landmarks, a place where people celebrate joy, conduct business, or see Oregon for the first time.