

Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers

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Date: February 25, 2026

To: Chair Jama, Vice Chair Starr, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules

Dear Chair Jama and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers (OSAEW) we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of SB 1501 with the -3 amendment.

The OSAEW is comprised of the seven local IBEW Unions representing over 10,000 working men and women employed under collective bargaining agreements in the Electrical and Energy sectors.

Senate Bill 1501 represents an important opportunity to invest in Oregon's workforce while preserving and improving a cornerstone public asset of Oregon. By authorizing the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to enter into agreements to own and operate the Moda Center, and dedicating project-related tax revenues to support renovation, capital improvements, and operations, this bill creates a clear pathway for sustained economic activity built on skilled, family-wage labor.

For our members, SB 1501 means real work for Oregon workers. Renovations and capital improvements to the Moda Center will require highly trained craftspeople across multiple trades, including electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, ironworkers, carpenters, laborers, operating engineers, and others. These are complex, large-scale projects that demand a skilled workforce, strong safety standards, and proven apprenticeship training systems, exactly what Union labor provides.

Projects of this magnitude also support registered apprenticeship programs, ensuring that the next generation of Oregon workers can enter the Trades, earn while they learn, and build long-term careers. SB 1501 helps sustain these pipelines by creating consistent, high-quality work that keeps training programs strong and workers employed locally.

Importantly, SB 1501 is structured to be fiscally responsible. The Oregon Arena Fund relies on tax revenues generated by activity in and around the Moda Center itself, ensuring that the economic benefits of the project are reinvested directly into the facility without pledging the state's general fund or creating unconstitutional debt. This approach aligns smart public stewardship with job creation and economic development.

Beyond construction, a modernized and well-maintained Moda Center supports long-term employment throughout the Moda Center, driving ongoing economic activity that benefits workers, local businesses, and the broader Portland community.

For these reasons, we strongly **urge your support for SB 1501**. This bill supports good Union jobs, strengthens apprenticeship training, and invests in infrastructure that will serve Oregonians for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Robert Westerman

President, Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers
Business Manager, IBEW Local 932