



February 13, 2024

TO: Senate Committee on Rules
FROM: Scott Bruun, Oregon Business & Industry
RE: Support for SB 1539 / Youth Sports

Good afternoon, Chair Lieber and members of the Senate Committee on Rules. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of SB 1539.

Oregon Business & Industry (OBI) is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Youth sports are a galvanizing force, and hosting signature events can provide a much-needed economic boost to host communities. Not only do these events bring visitors to Oregon and its local communities, but they also reinforce what we already know, and sometimes take for granted: that Oregon is a premier destination for athletic and recreational opportunities.

Further, aiding Oregon's communities in hosting such events—particularly those of a regional or national nature—means that Oregon's kids will have more direct, less expensive access to these activities.

Through a public-private partnership between Travel Oregon and Sport Oregon, these funds will be wisely invested in support of a variety of opportunities across Oregon, and the program is designed to ensure direct local government engagement. Individual grants are modest, which allows the fund to support numerous opportunities throughout the biennium.

Oregon must do all it can to recruit and incentivize economic activity. The Youth Sporting Event Grant Program established in SB 1539 provides a wonderful opportunity to leverage a historic strength (sports, recreation) in support of a sector hit hard by the pandemic (hospitality, tourism). Moreover, it does so through the support of youth and local communities.

We urge you to support SB 1539 and look forward to seeing its benefits come to fruition. Thank you.

Contact: Scott Bruun – scottbruun@oregonbusinessindustry.com