

February 15, 2024

Members of the Capital Construction Subcommittee:

I'm reaching out to support HB 5202 for a city-owned multiuse stadium in Hillsboro.

I write to you as a proud employee of 7 years for the Hillsboro Hops organization. In my time with the Hops, I've had the pleasure of working with hundreds (maybe thousands) of corporate and residential contacts to provide a fun, affordable, and family-friendly experience for their employees, clients, family, friends, etc. Our organization trains to put the customers' needs before our own and to always do everything we can to make sure their experience at the ballpark is a memorable one.

The thought of losing this team, our fans, our staff, my clients, and the many personal relationships I've made along the way puts a pit in my stomach. I take great pride in the service we provide for our wonderful communities. However, it wouldn't only be Hillsboro and Beaverton impacted by the loss of the Hops relocating. I work with many people who travel from the Oregon Coast, Salem area, Willamette Valley, and SW Washington who bring their family/friends to the ballpark throughout the season who would be devastated if the Hops were no longer here.

In our current location, we annually bring 150-200 thousand fans a year to the ballpark. If your committee is able to help us fund the new stadium, we will be able to double or triple that and do a much broader scope of events that appeal to more people than just baseball and sports fans. We want all our surrounding communities to feel engaged, included, and have a reason to join us for some fun at the ballpark.

In a perfect world, we wouldn't have to ask the City, County, and State to help us fund this project. We, however, are contractually required by Major League Baseball to meet their new stricter facility standards (as of 2021), because we are one of the 120 surviving teams (over 40 were removed) from the reorganization of Minor League Baseball. This reorg already cost the state of Oregon one professional baseball team in the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes, who are now a college wood bat team due to their demotion by MLB. Now, the Eugene Emeralds and us are fighting to secure ourselves as Oregon's two remaining professional baseball teams. If we don't comply, the Hops could be removed from Minor League Baseball or be acquired by an ownership group who have the resources to fund their own ballpark that is compliant with the mandatory facility standards. We unfortunately don't have billionaire owners that can fund a project of this magnitude like the Major League clubs do. Our ownership has spent a tremendous amount of money, time, and resources trying to keep the Hops in Hillsboro. If we are able to move forward with the project, our owners will also be funding 2/3's of the project through private financing, which is pretty unheard of in the sports industry. We've reached the end of what we can do without help though.

I know there are likely a lot of worthy causes that have been asked of the state's resources. However, I wholeheartedly believe that this investment will pay for itself with state and local taxes. Hillsboro has become my home, and the Hops are my life. I want nothing more than to continue on with the Hops and provide the best service for our local communities as possible.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Jonathan Kloster
Hillsboro, Oregon