

February 15, 2024

Committee: Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Subcommittee: Capital Construction

Measures: HB5201 – Bond Authorization
HB5202 – Capital Construction Funding

Dear Sen. Kate Liber, Representative Ken Helm, & Capital Construction Committee Members,

Executive Summary: Please consider the proposal from the City of Hillsboro and the Hillsboro Hops to issue a grant of \$15M from the Capital Construction Fund for the purpose of building a multi-purpose ballpark. The current ballpark, Ron Tonkin Field, doesn't meet MLB's new standards. A majority of the money needed to build the new ball park is coming from the majority owners of the Hops. If they don't get this grant, they will be forced to sell the team to new owners who will have to move the ballpark out of state.

Background: The City of Hillsboro and the Hillsboro Hops Management Team have been working for over 2 years to develop a plan to meet the new standards and have determined that building a new ball park is the most cost-effective way.

I am a retired Washington County resident, a seasonal Hillsboro Hops employee (Food & Beverage Warehouse Supervisor), and a Hops Season Ticket holder. After retirement, I started working for the Hops since I enjoy being in the ballpark as a fan and I also enjoy working with food. My wife, a full-time nurse at Legacy Health Systems downtown Portland, works weekend nights at the ball park.

My hope for a major league baseball team to reside in Portland seems impossible these days. Having the Hops in Hillsboro brings lots of joy to the community young and old, and is a source for entry level jobs for high school and college age students as well as parttime employment for others.

I support the following statements from the Hops President, K.L. Wombacher:

This makes economic sense for the state. The new ballpark will provide \$6.9 million in state income tax from the construction jobs and \$1.5 million annually from the ballpark related jobs. This results in a payback to the state in 6.5 years on direct income tax alone.

We need positive stories for our region. Oregon has taken their hit with negative headlines lately. We need positive headlines and we need to invest in quality of life. This new venue will provide affordable entertainment options year-round.

The Hops community support is substantial and grows every year. Since 2014, the Hops have donated over \$1 million to youth sports and education related opportunities.

We need places to gather for wholesome shared experiences. Ballparks bring people together like no other venue. Getting people out of their house and off their devices is critical for positive mental health. Nothing beats a generational experience like grandparents taking their grandkids to their first baseball game!

In closing, please support the City of Hillsboro and the Hillsboro Hops in their request for a grant of \$15M for building the new ball park in Hillsboro. It would be a shame to lose minor league baseball in the State of Oregon. We have been very fortunate in having Minor League Baseball in our back yard. I understand that there are many community and regional needs for state funding. I believe that supporting a family friendly low-cost entertainment such as the Hops provides much needed diversion from all of the serious issues we have in our region. The Hops have demonstrated their community involvement and support for 10 years by providing jobs and donations. Can we, the state of Oregon, show support of the Hops?

Sincerely and Thank You for your consideration,

Pete Vanoni