



Contact
info@sportoregon.org
503-234-4500

Address
1939 SW Morrison St.
Portland, OR 97205

February 15, 2024

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction

RE: Support for HB 5201 & HB 5202 Salem Baseball/Softball Turf Project

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to express Sport Oregon's support for the collaborative effort of the City of Salem, Willamette University, and the Salem Baseball Club to upgrade softball and baseball fields with turf and lights. The commitment from these partners and the offering of these fields to the community reflects a shared vision for enhancing our community's recreational facilities.

Sport Oregon- Oregon's Sport Commission is a 501c 6-member organization with over 125 like-minded companies and individuals who see sports as an engine for economic development. It also operates a 501c 3 foundation that provides grants and conducts programs to support youth sports, with an emphasis on both underserved youth, young girls and increased physical activity.

Sport Oregon maintains strong relationships with local, regional and state tourist and business associations to effectively drive and contribute to the economic development & recovery efforts impacting the state through sports tourism and the sports industry ecosystem.

We recognize the profound impact that sports and recreational activities have on our local economy. In 2022 alone, visitors to the region generated an impressive \$782 million, with a significant portion attributed to sports participants and spectators, which underscores the importance of investing in our sports infrastructure.

The proposed field upgrades not only align with at commitment to community development but also present a strategic opportunity to attract more tournaments and events. Turf fields with lights enhance the versatility and year-round usability of the facilities, providing an ideal setting for youth sports and attracting tournaments that inject new dollars into the region's economy.

Data has shown that sports tourism is an integral part of local and national economies across the US. Travelers attending sports tournaments, races, and other events – either as a participant or spectator represent a critical driver of the overall economy.

Sports ETA, the only trade association for the sports events and tourism industry, in its annual State of the Industry Report for 2021 cited the sports tourism sector's direct spending impact in the U.S. of \$39.7 billion and generated a total economic impact of \$91.8 billion. The sector supports 635,000 full-time and part-time jobs and generates \$12.9 billion in taxes.



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Considering the economic impact of sports on our region, the requested financial support from the Oregon legislature is not just a funding request; it is an investment in the continued growth and prosperity of our community. The positive ripple effects of this investment will be felt through increased tourism, local business engagement, and the overall enhancement of Salem's reputation as a sports destination.

Sport Oregon urges you to support this funding request and champion the collaborative initiative to upgrade the softball and baseball fields at Willamette University. Your advocacy for this project will contribute to the long-term economic sustainability of our region while providing valuable recreational opportunities for our community's youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Etzel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Jim Etzel

CEO, Sport Oregon