

Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction,

My name is Sabine Tronco, though if you know me you likely know me by Ceph, my nickname. I'm a college student at Willamette University and a lifelong resident of Hillsboro. I'm writing in support of HB 5201 because of the benefits the Hillsboro Hops offer to Oregon youth.

In a discussion that will undoubtedly touch on the Hops' potential as an employer, it is worth talking about who many of those employees are. As an employer they offer seasonal jobs with a low barrier to entry—perfect for high school and college-age Oregonians like myself. Just this past week I applied to work at the ballpark over the summer, and it was the most beginner-friendly job application I have ever filled out. I know my experience of attending a ballgame since I entered high school was one of running into many of my peers and friends, whether they be operating the merch store or running the till at a concession stand. Beyond the broader economic picture, they give people in my age range a valuable place to gain experience and confidence.

I've even seen the way they work to create unique opportunities for youth career development in particular fields. I had the pleasure of meeting a young woman who was assisting the MC of the game and was able to gain firsthand experience in communications and outreach while still in High School. She got to see herself on the big screen—how incredible is that?

Beyond the career and employment benefits the Hops offer to the youth of Oregon, there are also the social benefits. For the crowd of people who are too old for playgrounds but too young for clubbing, it can be hard to find activities and social spaces that feel actually worth your time. Going into the city is expensive and time consuming—tickets to the Oregon Zoo, for instance, now cost 24 dollars, and the most common place my friends want to go is Powells, which is all about spending money. The Hops commitment to offering low-cost admissions makes them a more affordable alternative and the fun they provide genuinely appeals to the whole family. If you want the youth of this state to get off their phones and start seeing each other, you have to give them places to do it.

Finally, I would like to touch on my more personal connection to this team. I began as a regular attendee of games with my mother at first because the Hops serve as a valuable center of community. They're a chance to encounter people I would rarely see otherwise and maintain relationships with them. This spiraled into a broader love of baseball that has me looking into how I could marry said interest with my plans for a J.D. The Hops are a community institution and a worthwhile investment, and it is my firmest hope the committee will see them in this way.

Respectfully,
Sabine (Ceph) Tronco.