

Submitter: Steve Callaway

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital  
Construction

Measure: HB5201

Hops Return on Investment is a Grand Slam for Oregon

Oregon is known for a lot of things, including the Hillsboro Hops.

Like Nike or Intel, the Hillsboro Hops have become a brand for our community and state. You see the Hops' name and logo on shirts, hats, and bumper stickers across the region. The team is part of our collective identity and a source of pride.

But the team that's been in Oregon more than a decade isn't just part of our culture. The Hillsboro Hops are a niche in the region where the sports, outdoor recreation, and athletic apparel industries generate more than \$29 billion a year and work together to create an economic ecosystem greater than the sum of its parts.

That's according to the Oregon: State of Sport report commissioned by the Portland Business Alliance, with contributions from the Hillsboro-based Washington County Chamber of Commerce.

Unfortunately, that ecosystem is under threat. The Hops need a stadium that meets MLB requirements, including providing all-gender changing rooms to accommodate female staff and players. This last year, Hillsboro Hops Manager Ronnie Gajownik became the first woman to lead a High-A baseball team, and more women are entering the sport.

Ecosystems are a delicate balance. Even the smallest change can create a ripple. Losing the Hops is a risk we can't take, especially when it's also a sound economic investment for the state and region.

As the Mayor of Hillsboro, I wholeheartedly implore our Oregon legislators to fund the \$27 million statewide package for youth and professional sports, including \$15 million for the Hillsboro Hops Ballpark Project.

It's our culture. It's our economy. It's our future. It's easy to see.

And while the Hops are part of the bigger economic picture for our region and state, they are also very focused on community. As an organization, they've funded scholarships for first-generation college students, supported youth sports teams across the state, and donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in goods and

services to nonprofits serving traditionally marginalized groups.

Those values are reflected in the entire statewide funding package proposed for youth and professional sports, which will ensure the next generation of Oregonians have access to activities that promote active lifestyles and offer affordable and inclusive family entertainment in local communities.

The Hops have stepped up to the plate in Hillsboro. The team plans to invest approximately \$80 million in private financing for the new ballpark, a nearly unprecedented amount for this type of project, which will pay for a majority of the costs.

The City of Hillsboro is on base, contributing \$18 million in funds generated through tourist to the new ballpark and the Washington County Board of Commissioners recently voted unanimously to pledge \$8 million in tourism funds.

We need the State to bring us home and keep the Hops in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Steve Callaway  
Hillsboro Mayor