

Testimony of Anneliese Koehler Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of House Bill 3377
House Committee on Economic Development, Small
Business and Trade
February 12, 2025



Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Metro supports HB 3377 which authorizes \$10m in lottery bonds for the James Beard Marketplace construction.

As the owner and/or operator of the Oregon Convention Center, the Portland Expo Center, Portland's Center for the Arts and the Oregon Zoo, Metro experienced firsthand the detrimental impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on our hospitality, arts and tourism sectors. While events and tourists are returning, we still have ground to make up. Convention center event counts, arts and culture attendees, and hotel occupancy continue to lag behind pre-pandemic levels. These industries need every advantage to regain their footing in the Portland region.

The James Beard Marketplace offers a critical catalyst opportunity to advance greater Portland's recovery. It brings vibrancy and culture to downtown Portland, revitalizing the central core of our region. And it reinforces our region's cutting-edge leadership in the culinary sector.

Metro urges your support of HB 3377.