



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Nathanson
Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters
Members of the House Committee on Revenue

FR: Graham Trainor, President
Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: ***Oregon Labor's Support For SB 110A - Bringing MLB to Oregon***

May 15, 2025

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and members of the Committee. My name is Graham Trainor and I'm proud to serve as President of the Oregon AFL-CIO, the statewide federation of labor unions representing over 300,000 working Oregonians and a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to engage in this esteemed panel to discuss a real walk-off home run of an opportunity for Oregon and her workers.

When those of us in the labor movement think about new development, whether it's a private or public project, and regardless of whether it's a sports stadium, hotel, or a supermarket, we look at what the long term gains for workers and their communities will be. We aren't just using a "build baby build" lens without a broader analysis of the types of impacts a project will have. Is a developer looking to turn a quick profit, cut corners, and minimize labor costs regardless of the quality of the work done on the project? Or are they looking to be a partner that will embody a value of creating GOOD, family supporting jobs throughout the life cycle of the development, and ensure their project will benefit the broader community?

When I think back to the earliest days of the Portland Diamond Project's vision for bringing MLB to Portland, a few things still come to mind: 1) They haven't been afraid to think big from day one; 2) They've been doggedly persistent about this vision for years - ahead of, through, and now on the other side of a global pandemic; and 3) They've been forward thinking about collaboration and partnerships from the earliest days of this journey.

As we began to engage with the Portland Diamond Project to better understand their goals and values over six years ago, we quickly realized that their vision for bringing Major League Baseball to Oregon had the makings of an incredible partnership with organized labor.

So when the PDP team signed a labor harmony agreement with nearly 20 unions that will apply to most of the jobs inside the stadium after it is built - all the way back in July of 2019; will soon be signing a MOU committing to the use of a project labor agreement for the construction phase of the stadium; and are about to sign an additional labor agreement helping to level the playing field for any future hotel workers on the footprint of the project; as they've done all of this proactive, partnership-building work, they have shown our community that they respect and value the working women and men of Oregon who would be essential ingredients to their success. We also know that, in the years ahead, there will continue to be opportunities to build on that early foundation between organized labor and the PDP team as this transformational project comes more into focus. An important high level note about this type of partnership: one of the most powerful and effective ways that Oregon working families can achieve equity and reduce disparities in the economy is through a union contract.

Their commitment to ensuring job creation was done in a way that will truly create shared prosperity for the community was on full display then...and it continues to be on full display today.

Let's just take a quick look at what this type of development can mean for the state's economy. In addition to the thousands of construction jobs, this project will also create hundreds of jobs inside the stadium. Many of these types of stadium jobs are traditionally low-wage, no-benefit seasonal jobs. However, thanks to this partnership, a future Oregon ballpark will take a different approach by giving workers a fair process to choose to be represented by a union if they'd like. This means that these workers will have an opportunity to bargain over working conditions, wages and benefits, pushing upward on the quality of many of these jobs once the stadium is built.

And beyond the direct construction, operations, and maintenance job creation, you've heard about Oregon's sports economy already. By combining the direct job creation, the overall sports economy ecosystem, and an exciting opportunity to bring hundreds of thousands more people into downtown Portland for what will be a year-round venue - not JUST a baseball stadium - the employment multiplier and economic boost of this magnitude cannot be overstated.

Over time, the labor movement has gotten more and more excited about these prospects, like so many Oregon baseball fans. It shows that when planning and development are done this way, everyone can win. And you don't even have to be a baseball fan to feel that excitement with a win-win vision like this one.

Oregon labor is ready to roll up our sleeves today and in the years ahead - working with state and local elected leaders - to ensure this vision becomes a reality. And thanks to the Portland Diamond Project's values and approach, we are well positioned to make Oregon...and her WORKERS...better off with baseball.

For these reasons, the Oregon AFL-CIO strongly supports SB 110A and we respectfully encourage you to move it out of Committee and to the floor with the same kind of enthusiasm for this opportunity that has been generated over the last few months.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this exciting project, and like many in this room and across the state, I'm looking forward to opening day.