

WE ARE RIP CITY

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NEW COALITION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO KEEP TRAIL BLAZERS IN OREGON, RENOVATE MODA CENTER

Email Campaign Urges City to Support Moda Project Now, Unlock State Funding

(Portland, OR) – A broad coalition of Portland restaurants, small businesses, community organizations, and civic leaders launched a new campaign today urging the Portland City Council and Multnomah County Commission to modernize the Moda Center and secure the Trail Blazers' future in Oregon.

The coalition, called "We Are Rip City," launched today with [a website](#), a broad and growing list of supporters, and a new email campaign asking Portland Mayor Keith Wilson and the Portland City Council to support the renovation project.

"This is an incredibly important moment for Portland, and for the future of sport in Oregon," said Jim Etzel, CEO of Sport Oregon and one of the four co-chairs of We Are Rip City (WARC). "We Are Rip City exists because the civic community cannot stand by and hope for the best. If we miss this window, we will not get another."

The State of Oregon has already committed \$365 million toward modernizing the Moda Center – funding that comes directly from income taxes paid by Trail Blazers players and staff, not from new taxes on Portland residents. The City must finalize a long-term operating agreement by December 17, 2026 or the state allocation expires, putting both the renovation and the team's future in jeopardy. The next step is a City Council vote in mid-August to kick off new lease negotiations with the Blazers.

"Our City Councilors and County Commissioners must act soon. We are at risk of losing the Trail Blazers, and that would be devastating for our community," said Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Vice President of DEI and Community Initiatives at Moda Health and a co-chair of WARC. "But this is not just about preventing a loss. This is also about building a thriving Central City and partnering in the restorative development of the Albina neighborhood."

The City of Portland already owns the Moda Center, which for decades has been where Portlanders gather for basketball games, concerts, graduations, family shows, and more. But the arena is outdated, and it has lost its competitive edge. Major concerts and world-class events are already starting to skip Portland because the arena does not have the modern infrastructure needed to support their performances.

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"Portland's cultural economy depends on a modern arena. Restaurants, venues, and small businesses feel the impact when major events skip our city," said Mike Thelin, co-founder of Feast Portland and a co-chair of WARC. "I'm calling on everyone I know to join us in asking our local elected leaders to say yes to this renovation project."

The growing group of WARC supporters includes award-winning restaurants and local businesses including: Ox Restaurant, Black Business Association of Oregon, Portland Fire and RAJ Sports, Bolted Consulting, Hoffman Construction, Menashe Properties, Colas Construction, National Association of Minority Contractors, Swinerton, Fortune Bar, Terracon, Grummel Engineering LLC, Guardian Real Estate Services LLC, Good Friends Playschool, Albina City Nuts, P&C Construction, Associated Wall and Ceiling Contractors of Oregon, Paper Products Marketing USA, TenBridge Partners, Early Bird Communications, Le Pigeon, Canard, Partners in Diversity, Wild Reed Yoga, Olympia Provisions, Jacobsen Salt, Karen Brooks, Cho Wines, Han Oak, Baumans Cider, Kachka, Nodoguro, ChefStable, Le Pigeon, Upper Left Roasters, Lightner Hospitality, Le Muselet, Rubinette Produce, St. Jack, Montelupo, Clyde's Prime Rib, Broder, Arden, Cafe Rowan, Henderson Avenue Wines, Beam Development, Grand Fir Brewing, Portland Night Market, Hopscotch, Spirit of 77.

"This is about opportunities, culture, family, traditions, and creating a Portland where people feel connected, welcomed, and excited," said Victoria Lara, CEO of Lara Media Services and a co-chair of WARC. "We Are Rip City is urging everyone – business owners, Blazers fans, Fire fans, foodies, music lovers, Oregonians – please, join our coalition and email your Councilors today."

Community members can learn more, join the coalition and email Portland City Council at WeAreRipCity.org.

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