

## **Opening Statement – Pat Battle**

### **Beyond the Ballpark: The Role of Minor Leagues in Economic Growth**

#### **Opening Statement**

- Thank you, Chairman Jack, Ranking Member Scholton, and distinguished members of the committee for inviting me to testify today about the importance of MiLB in helping to drive economic growth across the Country.
- My name is Pat Battle, and I am the Executive Chairman of Diamond Baseball Holdings.
- DBH is an organization that owns select affiliated MiLB Baseball Clubs, all of which are run as independent organizations by a passionate group of, on average, 25 employees in each of the communities that we serve.
- MiLB exemplifies the best of America. It is community focused, rooted in deep tradition, and representative of the broad cultures and customs across our country.
- This is why I am grateful to this committee for shining the spotlight on MiLB today, and why I am proud to share with you our mission (along with my colleagues on the panel) to preserve, protect, and enhance MiLB and, through that, to fuel small business economic growth for generations to come

#### **MiLB reaches many different constituencies, and represents something uniquely special to each group:**

1. For MLB and its 30 big league clubs, MiLB serves as the training ground for developing its future players, and also supports the growth of Baseball's fanbase at the grassroots level
2. The second group are professional baseball players, where MiLB represents their opportunity to achieve lifelong dreams as the path to make it to The Show. DBH relishes its role in supporting those dreams through close collaboration with MLB and our local municipal partners. The MLB HoF is full of great players who got their start in the minor league system
  - Willie Mays at the historic Rickwood Field in Birmingham
  - David Ortiz in Appleton, Wisconsin
  - Aaron Judge in Scranton, Pennsylvania
3. A third group impacted by MiLB are the 120 communities who host affiliated MiLB teams. The stadiums in which the teams play serve as the centers of energy in these communities and represent an important and vibrant gathering spot for local citizens. At DBH it is our desire for these stadiums, in addition to hosting roughly 70 baseball games a year, to host many events such as concerts, high school state championships, graduations, weddings, corporate outings, and the list goes on and on

- In April, I was proud to attend the opening of a new MiLB stadium in Columbus, GA. The ballpark has welcomed a wide sampling of citizens from across the region and we believe will have a transformative impact on its surroundings
  - And the community impact extends beyond what happens inside the stadium. We are proud of our planned stadium-adjacent mixed use entertainment district in Louisville, KY. In close partnership with the Louisville Metro Government and the State of Kentucky, the project will help revitalize downtown and create meaningful jobs for the local economy
4. The next constituency impacted by MiLB are the fans who reside in each community. At DBH, we believe we are in the memory making business, and we strive to do that in a fun, affordable way for families, friends, and colleagues. Affordability and accessibility are a top priority in MiLB. Our approach is to execute in a hyper local manner, celebrating the nuances which make each of our communities special and unique.
  5. Last but certainly not least is what MiLB represents to the more than 1,000 small businesses who partner with our teams in a variety of ways. Whether through advertising, sponsorship, vending, and more, these partnerships broaden their relationship with fans, other businesses, and the community as a whole.

## **Thank you**

- I hope I have given you a sense today of why we're so passionate about MiLB and its wide-reaching impact.
- DBH is committed to fostering small business relationships, public partnerships, community connections, and special memories giving communities something to root for together.