

Subject line for email:

SB 319 – Extends sunset for tax credit for contributions to Trust for Cultural Development

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

March 12, 2013

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Starr, and Committee Members,

I am writing today regarding the Oregon Cultural Trust and to express my support for SB 319, which would extend the tax credit for contributions to the Trust for cultural development.

I have the pleasure of working as the Director of Public Affairs for Timberline Lodge. Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1977, Timberline Lodge is one of Oregon's most popular tourist attractions, drawing nearly two million visitors every year. Considered an architectural wonder, it is still being used for its original intent—as a magnificent ski lodge and mountain retreat for all to enjoy.

As Timberline prepared to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2012, we knew that some improvements were needed to our beloved historic structure and grounds. In 2007, the Cultural Trust awarded a grant of \$10,000 to Friends of Timberline to restore its 250 seat outdoor amphitheatre, originally dedicated in 1937 as part of the original Timberline Lodge project – with Present Franklin Roosevelt in attendance. The Trust's funding enabled us to not only restore the amphitheatre, made of local materials, but make that area of our property more attractive for concerts, weddings and Forest Service interpretive programs.

In 2009 we were also fortunate to have an \$8,500 grant from the Cultural Trust to help create a safe winter entrance for Timberline. Working with Portland architect Ean Eldred, we completed the foundation and a removable seasonal entrance that has become a vital and interesting entry into the historic lodge, for roughly 1.9 visitors to the Rachael Griffin Exhibition Center.

We are very grateful for the Trust's broad mission – to support the arts, heritage and humanities, since our lodge covers all of those areas.

I also serve on the Oregon Heritage Commission established to steward heritage conservation and promote investment in our heritage as an essential element of Oregon's economic growth, quality of life and society. The Heritage Commission is one of the Cultural Trust's five statewide partners that use their statewide networks and programs to foster and support culture.

The Heritage Commission recently took the lead, working with Travel Oregon on a study on the impact of cultural and heritage tourism in Oregon. That study confirmed what many of us know: travelers who seek authentic cultural experiences spend more and stay longer in order to have deeper experiences.

Oregon's history and culture are at the center of that experience, and the 1,300 cultural organizations connected to the Cultural Trust form a vital network of providers of these experiences.

Oregon's cultural tax credit is a double win for Oregon. It encourages giving to the arts, heritage and humanities groups that make our state a unique home – and destination. And it is a powerful incentive for Oregonians to then give to our shared Cultural Trust fund so it can make grants in every county in Oregon – grants that preserve our important buildings, bring visitors to our state and that transform the lives of our young people.

I encourage you to vote “yes” on SB 319.

Sincerely,

Jon Tullis
Director of Public Affairs



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