

Christine D'Arcy

1628 Fairmount Avenue S. Salem, Oregon 97302
503/510-3633 darcychrist777@gmail.com

To: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Senator Mark Hass, Chair Senator Herman Baertschiger, Jr.
Senator Brian Boquist Senator Chris Edwards
Senator Chuck Riley

Re: SB 565
Date: March 2, 2015

I am writing in support of SB 565. I share Restore Oregon's belief that our state's historic downtowns are an economic, cultural, and environmental resource, the triple-bottom line that's a foundation of the historic preservation movement. We know that buildings in these downtowns house small businesses, host travelers and can often be locations for film shooting. But some buildings need a boost in order to meet current fire and seismic codes to be fully functional in the 21st century.

SB 565 – coined the Revitalize Main Street Act – proposes a new tax credit that will provide a 25% rebate for the certified rehabilitation of historic commercial buildings – stores, hotels, theaters, apartments, factories, mills, etc. It would be funded by auction of state income tax credits, like the Oregon Film Production Credit – except that all the money stays here in Oregon.

This is a relatively low-cost idea that will first and foremost create jobs and generate income and property taxes. But the potential results of this concept go far beyond the restoration and improvements of the buildings themselves. The Revitalize Main Street Act will not only revitalize iconic and historic downtowns like Pendleton, The Dalles and Albany, it promises to make our communities more attractive to visitors, reinvigorate upper stories spaces for new businesses, and preserve Oregon's distinctive architectural heritage.

Restore Oregon commissioned an economic impact study [EcoNorthwest, 2014] that shows that with an investment of just over \$10 million, by 2018, four times the number of buildings would be restored than without the credit, creating jobs and leveraging use of the federal Historic Tax Credit dollars invested in Oregon.

While you are in Salem for the session, you will have an opportunity to experience a downtown that could make use of the reinvestment proposed by SB 565. Imagine the buildings in the Downtown Salem Historic District after restoration and fire and seismic code updates. Then picture them with thriving small businesses, artists' studios – and even offices for lobbyists and public affairs firms – all contributing to Salem's and Oregon's economic and community vitality.

SB 565 has the potential to positively impact both small towns and big cities – bringing together urban and rural Oregon. I urge you to support SB 565 this session.

Cc: Rep. Brian Clem, Senator Peter Courtney, Anna Grimes, anna.grimes@state.or.us