

Oregon Cultural Trust

March 16, 2014

To: The Honorable Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

From: Brian Rogers, Executive Director
Oregon Cultural Trust, Oregon Arts Commission

Re: SB 441

Chair Beyer and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the Oregon Cultural Trust in order to provide background and context to SB 441. For 12 years, the Oregon Cultural Trust has played a vital role in building Oregon communities. The Cultural Trust is the state agency whose vision is for all Oregonians to sustain, develop, and participate in our arts, heritage and humanities. In 2014, we delivered on our mission to lead in building an environment in which cultural organizations are sustained and valued as a core part of vibrant Oregon communities by raising over \$4.3 million and distributing over \$1.8 million in grants to each and every county in Oregon. Over \$2.7 million was placed into our permanent fund, now at over \$25 million and growing, so that future generations may experience Oregon culture as we do today.

Led by our Governor appointed Board of Directors and administered by a staff of four (.5 FTE Executive Director, 1 FTE Trust Manager, .75 FTE Communications Manager, and 1 FTE Administrative Assistant), the Trust works to:

- Protect and stabilize Oregon cultural resources, creating a solid foundation for the future
- Expand public awareness of, access to, and participation in quality cultural experiences in Oregon
- Ensure that Oregon cultural resources are strong and dynamic contributors to Oregon's communities and quality of life
- Build understanding of the value and impact of culture to Oregonians

Through grant programs and encouraging philanthropy, the Cultural Trust helps fuel our economy, supporting cultural nonprofits that inspire our children, preserve our cultural treasures and foster Oregon's reputation as an incubator for new ideas. The Cultural Trust provides extensive support to rural areas and hard to reach places with the help of over 400 cultural coalition volunteers. All Oregonians can be part of this vision by supporting any of 1,400+ eligible cultural nonprofits, matching those gifts with a gift to the Trust, and taking Oregon's generous and unique state cultural tax credit (up to \$500 per individual, \$1,000 per household and \$2,500 per Class-C corporation).

Modernization of the Trust will allow it to meet dual capacity needs of its continued growth- both in increased tax credit participation and distribution of greater number and amounts of grants. 2014 was yet another record setting year of growth in donations to the Oregon Cultural Trust. Over \$4,320,000 was raised, an increase of 4% from 2013, including a 22% increase in donations from the Willamette Week Give Guide. Oregonians continue to participate in the tax credit in ever increasing numbers (over 8,800 gifts in 2014), and give in increasing amounts (an average of \$490). Significant growth in participation in the Cultural Trust tax credit is also seen statewide- in 2014 Douglas County showed a 31% increase in funds raised, while Sherman County experienced a 17% increase.

Oregonians know that Cultural Trust grant dollars provide critical leverage to county coalitions and cultural nonprofits. In FY2014 alone, foundational support of \$539,351 in Trust Cultural Development grant funds translated into 48 projects with a total budget of \$13,859,742. At the county level, coalition grants of \$545,858 were used to support community based projects exceeding \$1.6 million. Support for the state's five cultural partners exceeded \$500k, underwriting their statewide reach and service to Oregon's entire population.

In brief:

- * The Cultural Trust is generous, making over \$1.8 million a year in competitive grants to nonprofits across Oregon.
- * The Cultural Trust is statewide, supporting 45 county cultural and tribal coalitions with operations and annual grants, which the counties and tribes then sub-grant to local projects.
- * The Cultural Trust is forward-thinking, building a permanent fund, now more than \$25 million, so future generations can experience the Oregon culture we enjoy today.
- * The Cultural Trust is welcoming. Anyone can be part of this vision by supporting any of 1,400 eligible cultural nonprofits, matching those gifts with a gift to the Trust, and taking Oregon's generous and unique state cultural tax credit.
- * The Cultural Trust is money-smart, providing leverage for 1,400+ nonprofits, whose donors can match with a gift to the Trust to access the tax credit.
- * The Cultural Trust is results-driven, making over 1,000 grants to cultural organizations across the state, \$16 million since 2003.
- * The Cultural Trust is a partner for Oregon culture, working with five statewide cultural partners: Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon Humanities, Oregon Heritage Commission, and Oregon Historical Society.

The Cultural Trust is a champion for Oregonians as creators and innovators. On the southern coast of Oregon in the city of Bandon, artist and teacher Angela Haseltine Pozzi created the now internationally renowned environmental art and education project titled "Washed Ashore." Funded by a \$500 seed grant by the Coos County Cultural Coalition, Pozzi works with coastal communities to collect debris from Oregon's public beaches to create sculptures that illustrate the scope and scale of trash in our oceans. Pozzi's Artula Institute for Arts and Environmental Education is now a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to provide opportunities to express and teach environmental issues through the arts. The Trust is an investment in Ms. Pozzi's, and all Oregonians, vision for a brighter future.

Sincerely,



Brian Rogers
Executive Director
Oregon Cultural Trust