



Co-Chairs Gomberg and Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB441. My name is Steve Bass and I serve as President and CEO of Oregon Public Broadcasting. OPB receives support from the Oregon Cultural Trust for our history series, *Oregon Experience*. Co-produced with our colleagues at the Oregon Historical Society, this series has for the past nine seasons helped Oregonians better understand how we got to now. The Trust has also provided support to our daily radio program, *Think Out Loud*.

I serve on the boards of several cultural organizations including the Oregon Symphony, Portland Summer Ensembles, and the Oregon East Symphony in Pendleton. Through this work, I see the important impact that the Oregon Cultural Trust has on arts and culture organizations in urban, rural and in-between settings.

I fully support the changes to the Cultural trust that are proposed in this bill. Raising the minimum distribution from 42 percent to a minimum of 50 percent and providing the Trust board some discretion to increase it to as much as 60 percent of proceeds will enhance the mission of the Trust.

This flexibility is wise policy for several reasons. It will provide discretion to the Board to tailor grant-making to fit economic and other circumstances. During the most recent deep recession in Oregon – which still impacts many communities – the Trust was too constrained in its grant-making at a time when other sources of support dwindled. Giving the Trust board greater flexibility will provide a greater safety net for Oregon's arts and cultural economy in future downturns.

Raising the cap will enable the Trust to potentially support more organizations in more communities. For organizations like the Oregon East Symphony in Pendleton, a grant of \$5000 or \$10,000 from the Oregon Cultural Trust makes a significant difference as other sources of funding within the community are very limited.

It will also potentially allow the Trust to increase the higher end of its grants, which are capped at about \$35,000 annually. This could have a positive effect on giving to the Trust as the larger organizations such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Portland Art Museum, and the Oregon Symphony would have a greater incentive to communicate proactively to their donors about the benefits of giving to the Trust.

We are fortunate to have a strong board for the Oregon Cultural Trust as well as a strong leader in Brian Rogers. Giving them the tools to do their job even more effectively will have a very positive effect on Oregon's cultural economy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this bill.