

April 6, 2017

VIA EMAIL ONLY (hecdt.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Chair, Representative Ann Lininger
Vice-Chair, Representative Pam Marsh
Vice-Chair, Representative David Brock Smith
House Committee on Economic Development and Trade

Re: Written Testimony in Support of HB 3139 with the -2 Amendment

Dear Chair Lininger, Vice-Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith and Members of the Committee:

We are residents of Corvallis who are supporters of the arts. We are long-time members of the Corvallis Art Center, the Portland Art Museum, and the Gordon House Conservancy. We support the Architecture Foundation of Oregon's Architects in Schools program and the Corvallis Arts Center's Young Artists (Youth at Risk) Program. We have contributed annually to the Oregon Cultural Trust since its inception. We are also long-time members of organizations such as Oregon Public Broadcasting, the High Desert Museum, and the Benton County Historical Society, which are not, by strict definition, "arts organizations", but which provide significant arts programming to populations of Oregonians that do not have access to arts organizations. We understand the importance of the arts in the lives of Oregonians – all Oregonians – and do what we can to support arts programming. Thus, we are writing in support of HB 3139 with the proposed -2 Amendment.

The Oregon Arts Commission recently changed its eligibility criteria for its Operating Support Grant Program and its Arts Learning Grant Program, determining that institutions like the High Desert Museum, OPB, and county historical societies are no longer eligible for grant funding. In so doing, we think that the Commission 1) has strayed from the intent of the legislature when it originally passed SB 145 in 1967 and 2) has narrowed access to the arts. When SB 145 was passed, legislators stated the purpose of the Arts Program was to encourage the arts to flourish throughout the state. We believe the recent change in eligibility criteria marginalizes Oregonians who live in locations and/or situations that cannot and/or do not support organizations that focus narrowly on the arts. The proposed amendment seeks to restore the eligibility of a wider variety of organizations that provide arts programming and, thus, return to the original legislative intent of supporting arts programming and access throughout the state.

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The arts are more accessible and more meaningful when they are infused in and diffused by all our cultural and educational institutions, not just those organizations that are by strict definition and mission “arts organizations”. Please help us support access to the arts for all Oregonians by supporting HB 3139-2.

With respect and appreciation for the work you do to make Oregon a good place to live,

Kathryn and Doug Collins
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Corvallis, Oregon 97330