

April 7, 2017

VIA EMAIL ONLY ([hecdt.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto: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:

I serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the High Desert Museum. I am writing in support of HB 3139 with the proposed -2 Amendment.

Last year, The Oregon Arts Commission changed its eligibility criteria for its Operating Support Grant Program and Arts Learning Grant Program. The Arts Commission determined that arts institutions like the High Desert Museum are no longer eligible for grant funding. By changing the criteria, I believe that the Commission has inadvertently moved from the original intent of SB 145, originally passed by the Legislature in 1967. At that time, the legislators' communicated that the foundation of the Arts Program was to encourage the arts to flourish throughout the state without focusing on the type of art but rather the quality of the art. This bill seeks to return to the original legislative intent of promoting quality art throughout the state.

This bill further amends the statutory definition of "arts" to clarify that museum-related activities are included within the definition. The amendment is aligned with the museum-related activities that are supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. Clarification of Oregon's statutory definition of art is aligned with the NEA and is good public policy; it should facilitate efficient operation of the Arts Program by the Oregon Arts Commission, including the grant programs.

In addition, this bill instructs the Director of the Oregon Business Development Department to adopt rules for the grant programs administered by the Art Program. This objective would ensure that (a) the criteria used to determine the eligibility for grant awards take into account regional differences in public access to, or in opportunities for engagement in, arts and cultural development in the state and (b) promote investment in communities where opportunities for engagement in arts and cultural development is limited.

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Arts Program grant programs are largely funded by monies from the state's general fund. As a matter of fairness and equity, those monies should be based upon well-known, objective, and transparent criteria that promote the arts throughout the state. I urge you to vote in support of HB 3139 with the -2 Amendment.

Respectfully yours,

Sharon Carr Hewitt