

Submitted for Public Record by Victoria Frey, Executive Director, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art
To the Members of the House Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Capital Construction
Re: SB5530
May 9, 2017

Thank you all for a thoughtful and transparent process - balancing priorities and listening to the needs of constituencies throughout the state. Tough economic times require strong leadership and bold thinking. When people are most vulnerable we must continue to nurture the things that allow our communities to grow and thrive. The things that improve our quality of life and define our humanity. When money is scarce the fearful pull it away from the arts. The brave recognize that all great societies are remembered by the art they create. The arts and education break down barriers to understanding and bridge cultural differences. They strengthen the state and they give the people the tools and the inspiration they need not just to survive, but to prevail.

I am a representative of one of the eight cultural institutions throughout the state supported by the Oregon Advocacy Coalition's request for a total of \$6M in funding for capital construction projects. This coalition represents a broad range of projects ranging from the Oregon Caves to the Benton County Historical Society to my organization, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art. Like several of our peers, we were at risk of being priced out in a rapidly rising real estate market and were lucky enough to receive the gift of an underutilized warehouse space in NE Eliot - a neighborhood undergoing tremendous change and rapid gentrification. Permanent tenancy in this mixed-use neighborhood gives us the opportunity to reimagine our civic role in the local community and to provide an asset to a neighborhood in transition. It will allow us to better serve artists, community partners and our programs - including the annual TBA Festival which attracts over 25,000 people, 20% of whom are from out of state.

These projects strengthen Oregon by expanding our capacity to deliver cultural programming to all citizens, providing invaluable arts and educational experiences to people from every social and economic community, and giving voice to the most diverse population of Oregonians. They contribute to the economic vitality of our state, attracting visitors and bringing cultural tourism dollars. They grow jobs in the cultural sector, employing artists, educators, technical staff and other workers. In Oregon, the non-profit cultural sector employs nearly 15,000 people and generates an overall economic impact of \$1.2 billion annually. As we expand access to the rich array of cultural resources that draws people from all over the world to our state while preserving culturally significant artifacts for future generations, your investment and support is essential. A \$1B return on a \$6M dollar investment in arts and education will mark you not only as shrewd economic stewards, but as forward-thinking leaders committed to the best our state and our people have to offer.

This is a time for wisdom and vision. By supporting the arts you are not only supporting a dynamic economic engine, you are building the legacy that will define our community for generations.