

February 7, 2019

House Committee on Economic Development

RE: SB 2052, Oregon Cultural Trust

Extends sunset for tax credit for contributions to Trust for Cultural Development Account

Dear Committee Members

I am the President of the Santiam Heritage Foundation, located in Stayton, Oregon. This organization owns and manages the Brown House Event Center in Stayton. The house is a 1903 Victorian style home on the National Register of Historic Places. We hold cultural events to help build community and make the house available for private rental, so others can make new memories in the house. We are also just beginning to organize a plethora of historic materials we have been fortunate to inherit, which we plan to use to educate local children and adults about Stayton's past.

The foundation is fortunate to have been an organization which qualifies for the tax credit for contributions to the Cultural Development Trust. Without this fund and the benefit of the Trust, we would not be where we are today. A little over 18 years ago the Charles & Martha Brown House was a derelict place. It sits on a prominent corner in Stayton and was an eyesore, to say the least. A few local people gathered together to save it and make it a place for community. We have never gone into debt to restore and rehabilitate the house, but without the extra benefit of the tax credit, which you will be reviewing, we might have lost this local historic treasure.

I am in full support of extending the sunset for tax credit for contributions to the Trust for Cultural Development Account for ten years. Either that, or remove the sunset altogether.

As a cultural foundation, we are not alone in Oregon. Many, many organizations all over the state make use of the Oregon Cultural Trust and depend on contributors who give to the trust and support culture in Oregon. Without the trust, I fear cultural organizations in Oregon would suffer, struggle or simply cease to exist. I know it would hurt my local town of Stayton, which is just beginning to redevelop our historic downtown.

I strongly encourage you to extend the sunset on this tax credit or eliminate it.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Wendy Weddle Stone

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