

March 31, 2019

House Committee on Economic Development

RE: SB 2132 Oregon Cultural Trust

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

Dear Committee Members,

I am a retired educator in Astoria spending my time volunteering for several cultural organizations in Clatsop County. I was employed at Astoria High School for twenty-eight years teaching French, German and English. I serve on the Clatsop Cultural Coalition and am past co-chair. I am entertainment director for the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival, an Oregon Heritage Tradition now in its 52nd year. I am Vice-Chair of the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Park Committee which is building Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Park on the Astoria Riverwalk. I am a musician and perform with the North Coast Symphonic Band and the Little Ballet Theatre Nutcracker Orchestra.

I am in FULL SUPPORT of extending the sunset for tax credit for contributions to the Trust for Cultural Development Account for six years. This program is unique to Oregon and one of the things that makes our state a special place to live. Clatsop County is small in population (barely 40,000) but we host large numbers of visitors to our community year-round. According to a City of Astoria Parks and Rec counter in 2017, an estimated 7,000-10,000 people use the Astoria Riverwalk monthly or 84,000-120,000 annually. Twenty-two ocean-going cruise ships brought 43,000 passengers to the area in 2018. Willamette Weekly called Astoria “Portland’s trendiest new neighborhood” and we host hundreds of visitors from the Portland Metro area every weekend. Astoria’s premier attraction, the Columbia River Maritime Museum, tallied 117,000 paying visitors in 2017. Astoria’s Wine and Seafood Festival, the Great Columbia Crossing, the beer breweries, Goonie attractions, and the natural beauty of the region draw thousands of additional visitors. More and more visitors seek educational and cultural tourism opportunities and that’s where the Cultural Trust and its programs help our region to shine. The quality of life for local residents is also improved with these opportunities.

The Clatsop County Cultural Coalition awarded \$10,000 in Cultural Trust funds to nine organizations for fiscal year 2019. Total grant funds requested by local artists and non-profits were \$32,452 so there is always more to do if additional funds become available. Visit www.ClatsopCulturalCoalition.org for details of how these ten groups will use their funds to benefit the county’s cultural life.

The Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association received two OCT grants in 2018. One is a grant of \$17,114 to help build Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Park on the Astoria waterfront. This project is well underway and these early grant funds were a real boost to our efforts. We also received a smaller grant of \$750 to hire a consultant for a fundraising workshop. We gained valuable skills and are implementing the ideas from the workshop to achieve our goal and are halfway there already. Details are online at www.AstoriaScanPark.org.

The North Coast Symphonic Band received a \$2,000 grant from the Clatsop Cultural Coalition in 2018 to help bring 3 Leg Torso to Astoria to perform with our community music group. I can personally attest to the thrill it was to rehearse with this high energy group of music professionals. Audience and musicians alike were alive with enthusiasm for this event. Unfortunately, the power went out before the concert finished but the concert is rescheduled and we get to rehearse and perform again with 3 Leg Torso on July 3, 2019. More information is available at www.NorthCoastSymphonicBand.org.

These are just three specific examples of how the Oregon Cultural Trust makes an impact in the local area. I'm sure there are equally inspiring stories from every county in Oregon and **respectfully ask for your support of SB 2132 Oregon Cultural Trust.**

Thank you for your service to Oregon.

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