

O. Hm.

Oregon Humanities

April 2, 2019

House Committee on Economic Development
RE: HB 2132, Oregon Cultural Trust
Extends tax credit for contributions to Trust for Cultural Development Account

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing in my role as executive director of Oregon Humanities to express my strong hope that you will extend the tax credit for contributions to the Trust for Cultural Development Account for 6 years.

Oregon Humanities is one of the Trust's five Cultural Partners as well as the Oregon affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Though we are a partner of the Trust and the Oregon affiliate of the NEH, we are an independent non-profit, with board members, including up to 5 gubernatorial appointees, from all over the state (currently including La Grande, Bend, Newport, Talent, Salem, Astoria, and elsewhere). All of our work bubbles up from and happens in partnership with people and organizations around the state: we distribute funding; operate face-to-face conversation programs; commission and share writing, audio, and films by and about Oregonians; and collaborate with community organizations, non-profits, civic entities, and educational institutions to build civic capacity. We partner with about 200 organizations around the state per year and reach more than sixty thousand Oregonians per year.

The existence of the Oregon Cultural Trust goes a good way toward making these partnerships and work possible, and the tax credit sits right at the center of the Trust's capacity to function so effectively as a partner and supporter of Oregon Humanities and more other organizations and communities than I could possibly count here.

I have the good fortune in my job to travel around the state and join groups of people in discussions about the conditions and aspirations of their communities. Through programs like the Conversation Project, Bridging Oregon, Think & Drink, and Humanity in Perspective (a college program for adults living on low incomes), I am able to get a small window into what Oregonians care about and value. On the basis of many of these conversations, from Grants Pass to Joseph to Prineville to Portland, I can tell you that the Trust matters a great deal to how people live their lives and see themselves and their communities.

I also have the good fortune to meet regularly with Trust staff and board members, and with the other Trust Partners. The statewide web of relationships that the Trust creates and sustains is also an essential part of the Trust's value to the state.

The Trust is a unique and special entity. I hear from directors of humanities councils in other states how much they admire and even envy what we have set up here in Oregon. I see its impact every day. And I know how much it means to what this place is and can become. Thank you for considering the 6-year extension. I hope the Trust's value to Oregon is as apparent to you as it is to me, and I hope you won't hesitate to contact me if any more information would be helpful.

Thanks also for your leadership and service to the state.

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