

February 15, 2019

House Committee on Economic Development

Re: HB 2132, Oregon Cultural Trust

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

Dear Committee Members,

I am Victoria Snow Mountain, the newly retired Managing Director of Ballet Folklorico Ritmo Alegre, A youth Mexican folk dance troupe based in Medford, Oregon.

I want to express my full support for extending the sunset for tax credit for contributions to the Trust for Cultural Development Account for six more years.

Since 1992 I have worked with young dancers to preserve Mexican traditional folk heritage and to share these beautiful dances in our local community and around the state of Oregon. Starting as a high school club, the group expanded into the community, as children of all ages and many local schools wanted to join the dance troupe. We became a 501c3 nonprofit in 2014 and struggled to create a sustainable financial plan to keep the organization with a couple of paid staff yet still keep dance class tuition accessible to our mostly low-income families. Over the years our group became a visible symbol of the richness and joy of Mexican culture, helping to keep immigrant Mexican families connected across generations and building cultural bridges across our diverse communities.

Our group might well have disappeared if it wasn't for the support of the Oregon Cultural Trust. Because of the generosity of the Trust, we received a grant that supported us to create and implement our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan that included Board and program development and a succession plan to guide the group's emergence from a founder driven to a collaborative model. A subsequent grant has helped to move the process forward even more and to ensure its survival.

I personally have been very impressed by the Cultural Trust's statewide presence in promoting cultural organizations and events. I contribute annually and have a Cultural Trust license plate on my car. I am very proud and grateful to live in a state that celebrates and supports a wide variety and richness of cultural expression.

Thank you for your consideration of this unique program that makes our state a model for all.

Sincerely,

Victoria Snow Mountain  
1905 Talent Ave, Talent OR 97540  
Retired Managing Director, Ballet Folklorico Ritmo Alegre  
Retired Teacher, South Medford High School

