

To: Tri-Chairs Senator Johnson, Senator Steiner Hayward and Representative Rayfield and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee

From: Lisa Arkin

Re: SB 5555 in support of funding for the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center

Date: April 17, 2021

In 2019 I was fortunate to meet Gwendolyn Trice and tour the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center in Joseph, Oregon. Gwendolyn Trice is the executive director and founder of the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center. If a person visits the Center and meets Ms. Trice, it will become immediately apparent that both she and the project she oversees are unique Oregon assets to be treasured and sustained.

I want to briefly share with the Joint Ways and Means Committee members my hope that the Maxville Center will garner your full attention and support to provide the \$750,000 of funding to support its vision and projects in the 2021-23 Cultural Resources Economic Fund.

Absorbing the information in the exhibits was an eye-opening and positive learning experience for me. I'm a lover of history, particularly United States history. I believe that being exposed to and learning the history and story of African American loggers in Maxville and other ethnically diverse workers in Oregon logging communities is immensely beneficial to youth as well as residents and visitors to our State.

The historical materials at the Maxville Center are compelling. In fact, in partnership with the City of Eugene and the University of Oregon my non-profit, Beyond Toxics, arranged for Ms. Trice to be invited as a scholar-in-residence. We also collaborated with a number of restaurants in the core of Eugene to host a 2-week display of the Maxville Center traveling exhibit, called Timber Culture, as an incentive to bring more people downtown. Unfortunately, the program was set to open on March 16, 2020, just as the pandemic shut down began. Nonetheless, we felt the cultural and historical content was too important to postpone, so we worked with Ms. Trice to shift to successful online and virtual programming. The online lectures on African American loggers in Maxville was attended by over 500 people and have been viewed by thousands more.

The Maxville Heritage and Interpretive Center collects, preserves, and interprets the history of the diverse logging community of an Eastern Oregon town and similar communities throughout Oregon, from Columbia to Lane to Klamath County. This project is preserving a historical site where multicultural logging families contributed to Oregon's timber economy, a cultural contribution that continues today across the state. Funding the Maxville Heritage Center is surely going to plant seeds in other Oregon logging communities hoping to showcase their histories of local logging and worker culture.

Supporting the expansion and updating of the exciting Maxville Center exhibits and in-person interpretive experiences is an investment in rural Oregon communities. This funding will give a

boost to local economies by attracting Oregon residents and visitors to our state to visit and enjoy the rich heritage of county historical museums and the cities that host these public assets.

I urge the members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee to fund the full slate of capital construction projects sought by diverse and important cultural organizations as an economically beneficial way to increase equity and access to these facilities as well as build the narratives of multicultural and civic history throughout Oregon. There are endless possibilities to enhance Oregon's cultural, tourism, educational and sustainability sectors that will come to fruition should this funding request be fulfilled.

Sincerely,

Lisa Arkin, Executive Director
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