

Submitter: Sue Densmore

On Behalf Of: Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction

Measure: SB5703

Assistance with the Restoration of the National Historic Landmark - the Oregon Caves Chateau

Thank you for considering this request as you come to the end of this very important Legislative Session.

The restoration of the Oregon Caves Chateau is critical to the economic vitality of rural Josephine County. On the highway between I-5 and the Oregon Coast, the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve has been an important educational, outdoor experience for families since 1922. The underground Cave Tour has retained interest and evolved over many years. According to a study by the National Park Service, the monument had 78,000 visitors in 2014, bringing 6.3 million into the region. As we know, National Park properties are a vital ingredient to rural economies. With the restoration of the lodge, studies show that that number will substantially increase and will benefit the Illinois Valley but also much of SW Oregon. The Chateau, an 89 year-old remarkable lodge has welcomed guests for over 89 years. Since 2007, The Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau have been working closely with the National Park Service, to gain funding for this critical upgrade. After 15 years of concentrated effort, the National Park Service is currently funding and carrying out the Life, Safety, Accessibility, Seismic and Foundation Stabilization upgrade. The State of Oregon through the Cultural Advocacy Coalition is funding the recreation of the Balconies - original to the Chateau. We have a short, 18 month, window to make sure the historic interior is properly restored while all the NPS work is being accomplished, so it will be complete when the lodge reopens. Our request today is to help fund the last and maybe most important part of this project, the restoration of the interior Historic integrity of the Lodge. To retain the National Historic Landmark status this must be done to meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards. The Historic restoration of the interior is the responsibility of the Friends. If you could assist with that effort with 500,000 we are confident we can raise the remaining 1 million through Foundations and individual donors.

Again, we appreciate consideration of our request, this will support employment of over 70 individuals in a small rural community of 1,100 residents.

Thank you.

Sue Densmore, Executive Director of the Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau