

O. Hm.

## Oregon Humanities

February 11, 2023

Dear Chair Grayber and members of the House Committee on Emergency Management,

I'm writing as the executive director of Oregon Humanities, one of five Cultural Partners of the Oregon Cultural Trust, to thank you in advance for your consideration of the Cultural Impact Program, which would provide \$200m to fulfill the promise the Oregon Legislature made when the Oregon Cultural Trust was established and in doing so would provide essential support to over 1600 cultural non-profits in communities across the state.

By dedicating \$200m in lottery bonding capacity to the corpus of the Oregon Cultural Trust so that the eventual earnings can be given out statewide through grants to those nonprofits that qualify for OCT/OAC funding, this bill would help Oregon step more fully into becoming one of the nation's cultural hubs. This program is called the Cultural Impact Program (CIP) but it could also be known as the Cultural Promise; there were always supposed to be public funds in this unique-to-the nation program, and they were to come from the sale of public lands. That sale never happened, so the \$30m in the corpus today has come through a tax credit offered to Oregonians to help build donations. For all the reasons we know — the healing impacts of the creative sector, the economic impacts, the social justice impacts — we need to see the original promise fulfilled. This session lottery bonding capacity is at an unusual high point, and it is the right time to complete this promise.

In my role at Oregon Humanities, I have become well-acquainted with hundreds of cultural organizations across the state, from theaters in North Portland to libraries in Prineville to literary organizations in the Wallowas to historical societies in Garibaldi to community radio stations in the Illinois Valley, and many more. I have seen just how crucial these organizations are to the civic and economic fabric of their communities—and I have also seen how much more they could be and do if the Cultural Trust were to realize the vision that led to its creation.

You are no doubt adjudicating between many worthwhile claims, so I will keep this short and clear: this support for cultural organizations in Oregon would mean a great deal to the state as a whole and to Oregon Humanities' own efforts to contribute to an Oregon that invites diverse perspectives, explores challenging questions, and strives for just communities. Our work prioritizes partnership with and support of rural communities and communities of color, and it contributes to a culture of belonging that serves as the foundation for the democracy that you are helping administer.

Thank you again for your dedication, work, and consideration.



Adam Davis  
Executive Director, Oregon Humanities