

Submitter: Cate OHagan

On Behalf Of: Deschutes Cultural Coalition

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB3532

The Honorable Janelle Bynum
Chair, House Committee on Economic Development
and Small Business
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, Oregon. 97301

RE: HB 3532, Trust for Cultural Development Administrative Cap Change

Dear Chair Bynum and Committee Members:

My name is Cate O'Hagan and I am the volunteer President of the Deschutes Cultural Coalition. I am writing to you today in support of HB 3532, a revenue neutral bill to change the administrative spending cap of the Trust for Cultural Development (dba The Oregon Cultural Trust – OCT). The Deschutes Cultural Coalition supports this bill. We leverage an annual distribution of funding from OCT by re-granting to our local cultural coalitions to help them develop their capacity to serve our Oregonians who live here. As a volunteer group, we absolutely rely on a strongly supported OCT administration to help us help others.

Locally, we affectionately refer to Ben Westlund as the Father of the Cultural Trust. Yes, there were other partners in the effort, but he was the one who we frequently talked to about creating a funding vehicle that floated all boats. Of particular concern here and around the state, is that organizations who work on the ground at the community level be equitably supported. Ben took that in and agreed. Unless we support the communities, the OCT fund distribution formula would be unbalanced. The Trust brilliantly reflects the need to float all boats. Organizations here who produce amazing theater for kids, access to our local symphony orchestra, preserve our history, celebrate the natural environment and culture of central Oregon are essential to making the cultural fabric of Oregon whole. Please vote to leverage the work of legions of volunteers who have their shoulders to our cultural wheel.

The Oregon Cultural Trust is a unique-to-the nation vehicle for supporting over 1500+ eligible nonprofits with grant funds to meet our shared mission of making sure every Oregonian has access to arts and culture in their community. Oregonians have built a corpus of over \$30 million dollars using the tax credit generously provided by the state. The original

administrative cap of \$400,000 needs to be modernized to keep pace with the current demands and needs of Oregon's cultural organizations, the 45 county and tribal coalitions, and the five statewide agency partners currently supported. HB 3532 is a revenue neutral policy change that will exponentially increase our collective capacity to serve our cultural community.

We in Deschutes County know the power of creativity to build communities and collective understanding. We know the economic impacts that arts and culture bring to our state through tourism, event attendance and scholarly study. This sector has been among the hardest hit from the pandemic and recovery continues. Not only do we need more public financial support, but we need to update our tools and support our dedicated volunteer networks to serve the sector at this critical time.

On behalf of the Deschutes County, we strongly urge your support for HB 3532. Thank you for the opportunity to hear directly from the field about the important work of the Oregon Cultural Trust.

Thank you and All Best,
Cate O'Hagan, President, Deschutes Cultural Coalition