

Oregon Humanities

March 28, 2023

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 Adam Davis and I am the executive director of Oregon Humanities, a statewide cultural organization that connects people and communities through conversation, storytelling, and participatory programs to inspire understanding and collaborative change. 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). This bill will enable the Trust to better serve grantees across the state through deeper organizational capacity.

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.

Oregon Humanities is one of five Cultural Partners of the Oregon Cultural Trust, and I can tell you that from this vantage point—and from the vantage point of a former Chicagoan who moved to Oregon almost ten years ago—there is nothing quite like the Trust anywhere else in the country. The Trust is structurally set up to support and connect a complex and deep ecosystem of cultural organizations across Oregon—and in order to do this essential, connecting work as well as it could, it needs more staff capacity. I say this as the director of a cultural organization whose work depends on and builds partnerships all over Oregon. We are fortunate to work closely with the Trust—and it has helped me see just how much the lifting of the administrative cap could mean to what the Trust is able to accomplish.

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Oregon Humanities' hundreds of community partners and thousands of program participants and readers across the state 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 all of Oregon Humanities many partners and participants, 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Davis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Davis
Executive Director, Oregon Humanities