

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 Cherie Gullerud and I am a volunteer with the Benton County 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). Our County Cultural Coalition supports this bill which will enable the Trust to better serve grantees through deeper organizational capacity.

I know you have received a lot of letters like this. Without giving you the same statistics you may have already seen, I want to let you know how much The Oregon Cultural Trust and the Benton County Cultural Coalition has helped the groups I am involved with. While being the Theatre Arts Teacher at Crescent Valley High School, the funds helped us buy two sewing machines and equipment for costume use. The orchestras I play harp in, The Willamette Valley Symphony and the Salem Philharmonia depend on funds to buy music and update lighting systems and to provide tickets for young people. At The Majestic Theatre in Corvallis we rely on Cultural Trust funds to help with the spiraling costs of licensing shows, set building, costume construction and prop building. The funds help our Youth Theatre shows.

In the years I've been involved in the arts I've never seen audiences hunger for live experiences more than they do now. The productions at The Majestic are often sold out, yet because it is run by The Parks and Recreation Department ticket sales often go to other City projects (like Swimming Pool Maintenance) instead of back into our productions. The money from The Cultural Trust is greatly needed for these and so many other projects that are happening in our county, like a tile mural at the County fairgrounds, Civil Rights speakers for Youth Groups, Supplying T shirt makings for rural library summer programs, and translating Cultural Arts websites into other languages, for example.

The Cultural Arts entertain, heal, and teach in ways that formal education cannot. We need them for a sense of community - especially in these post-lockdown times. Thank you for the generous support in the past, and we hope the Committee will see that changing the administrative spending cap of the Trust for Cultural Development will be in keeping with

rising costs. These funds will return educational, cultural, and emotional dividends to the constituents of our County and beyond. 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 Benton County Cultural Coalition 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,

Cherie Gullerud, MAT

Benton County Cultural Coalition Co-Grant Manager
artscherie@gmail.com