

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 Robert Siegel, and I am the prior Chair for 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 and meaningful empowerment.

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. One of the administrative needs, as an example, is training how to use the grant documentation required every year to ensure good stewardship of the state's funds.

We are a County Coalition of about 10-12 member volunteers, putting in on average 40-50 hours each of volunteer time each year. This equates to nearly \$17,000 of time to manage our yearly awards of between \$15K and \$19K, meaning we DOUBLE the amount the legislature provides for Benton County. We desperately need to upgrade our website to be bilingual English-Spanish which will ensure we reach under-served populations. Photos of some of our grantees can be found [here](#). Our coalition alone has provided for over 1300 grants over the past 18 years in Benton County alone. Yet, managing this work requires training of our volunteers and administrative assistance (e.g. providing interactive PDF forms for reporting, which has been sadly lacking from the Cultural Trust).

We in Benton County know the power of creativity to build thriving 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 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

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