

February 7, 2024

Janelle Bynum
Chair
House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 4124

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of HB 4124 which proposes to fund significant cultural capital projects across Oregon. All, identified by the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, are important in their local communities and will, in the short term, support jobs, and in the long-term, provide increased access to cultural programming for Oregonians and visitors.

Salem's iconic Eco Earth Globe, one of these projects, is a major element in Riverfront Park, one of Salem's largest public parks, used by many. Five years in the making, Eco-Earth is a converted industrial acid ball that was transformed by area artists and students into a massive colorful piece of public art. Over 300 ceramic icons depict wildlife, cultures, religions, and historic events from around the world. Eco-Earth was gifted to the City of Salem in 2003 as a symbol of global awareness, world peace and cultural diversity. It has become a local treasure.

Now after a decade, time and extreme weather have deteriorated the Globe. Water infiltration is evident. In 2020, the City's Public Art Commission commissioned a comprehensive condition assessment with an estimate for repair. Architectural Resources Group estimated \$400,000 as the cost of restoration.

I am requesting that the Committee on Economic Development and Small Business support the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon's 2024 slate of capital construction projects, including an allocation of \$150,000 for the Restoration of the Eco-Earth Globe in Salem's Riverfront Park.

Eco Earth is a prominent symbol of world peace, global awareness, and cultural diversity. There could not be a better time to reinforce these core values in our community.

Sincerely,

Christine D'Arcy

Christine D'Arcy
Former Chair, City of Salem Public Art Commission