

February 9, 2024

Oregon Legislature
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Salem, Oregon

Dear Chair Taylor and Committee Members

I recently retired after a 24-year tenure as Director of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education (OJMCHÉ). I am also a current board member of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon (CACO). SB 1582 is one of the most critical bills to come before the legislature for arts and culture organizations around Oregon and with this letter I respectfully ask for your vote, which will provide funding for 14 critically needed Capital projects and resilience funding.

OJMCHÉ received CREF funding in 2022 to support a capital expansion project and a new core exhibition, *Human Rights After the Holocaust*. This support came at a critical time in our fundraising and gave the project an indisputable “stamp of approval” that helped us to leverage additional funding from foundations and individual donors. We completed the campaign on time and on budget and the exhibition has already attracted 1000s of school children and adults since its opening last June.

This past year, I had the privilege to join the CACO committee that recommended CREF projects to the Legislature. While in the last session we were grateful that two Portland Metro projects were selected for funding, we were sorely disappointed that the remaining 14 projects did not receive funding. These are all important and worthy projects representing a variety of institutions and art disciplines around the state. I sincerely hope that these projects – all “shovel ready” – receive your support.

More, a part of SB1582 includes Resiliency Funding for the Arts and Culture Sector. Oregon’s arts and culture sector was among the first to close and the last to reopen following the pandemic. This has led to an outsized negative economic impact on arts and culture organizations. But – important to remember – is that the sector has an outsized impact on the economic vitality of communities around Oregon. The Resiliency Funding for the Arts and Culture Sector is of critical importance for the local economy who reap the benefits of people enjoying restaurants, hotels, and/or shopping in neighborhoods that they visit when they also enjoy a cultural opportunity – the arts and culture sector in Oregon generated \$9.3 billion in state economic activity and employed 62,725 people in 2021. We know too that in times of divisiveness, arts and culture bring people together regardless of their backgrounds. Supporting the resilience of this sector is an investment in the local economic vitality of our communities, across Oregon.

Please know how very grateful I am for the work of your committee. Support for the creative sector through passage of SB 1582 is essential and I strongly urge your support.

With appreciation



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