

Submitter: Heidi Hagemeyer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

April 1, 2025
Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Oregon Legislature
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for High Desert Museum's Capital Construction Project

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez and Committee Members:

I'm pleased to express my strong support for the High Desert Museum's \$2 million Cultural Resource Economic Fund award request included in HB 3191 that is in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. The High Desert Museum is a regional treasure and the award will help fund an expansion that will benefit all of Central and Eastern Oregon for generations to come.

The Museum has raised over \$30.5 million—76% of its \$40 million goal. This project will add a state-of-the-art Learning Center to meet intense demand for the Museum's K-12 programs; a dedicated art gallery, the only one of its kind within 130 miles; the High Desert Hall to provide a home for the Museum's many events and programs; and the renovation of the permanent exhibition dedicated to the Indigenous cultures of the High Desert Plateau, co-created with Native partners. The sum comes from private individuals, federal agencies and foundations.

For more than four decades, the Museum has created experiences that meaningfully connect broad audiences to the art, cultures, history and ecology of the High Desert. Today, this nationally recognized museum serves nearly 225,000 visitors annually and is the largest arts and culture institution on the east side of the Cascades. It exercises sound, strategic fiscal management, with a balanced budget over the last 15 years that is at roughly \$8 million.

Investing \$2 million included in HB 3191 or in HB 5006 would provide essential funding for the Museum to complete this expansion and continue serving a fast-growing, dynamic region. I urge you to support this investment in the future of the High Desert Museum and in arts and culture in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Heidi Hagemeyer