

April 3, 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 want to express my strong support for the High Desert Museum's \$2 million Cultural Resource Economic Fund award request included in HB 3191, which is in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

As a parent, I have valued the role the Museum has played supporting both the curiosity and education of both of my children (not to mention countless others) regarding the natural environment and wildlife over the years. As a trustee, donor, and finance professional, I am continually impressed by the vision and stewardship of the Museum's leadership team. This award is critical for an expansion benefiting not just Central and Eastern Oregon, but the broader regions the Museum draws to Oregon, for generations to come.

The Museum's ambition and performance is notable:

- It has raised over \$30.5 million (76% of its goal) for its first major expansion in nearly three decades. This will add a state-of-the-art Learning Center for the Museum's K-12 programs; a dedicated art gallery (only of its kind within 130 miles); the High Desert Hall 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 Museum has created awe-inspiring experiences that meaningfully connect broad audiences to the art, cultures, history and ecology of the High Desert for 43 years, serving nearly 225,000 visitors annually as the largest arts and culture institution on the east side of the Cascades. It is nationally recognized and exercises sound, strategic fiscal management, with a balanced budget for over a decade that is now at roughly \$8 million annually.

The High Desert Museum is a vital educational resource, regional arts anchor, and powerful economic driver. Investing the \$2 million included in HB 3191 or in HB 5006 will 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.

Regards,

Justin Snyder

Trustee, High Desert Museum