

Written Testimony for the Legislative Tour April 11, La Grande Oregon. April 7, 2025

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

Dear Co-Chair Lieber and Co-Chair Sanchez, Vice Co-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith,
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

I am writing in support of HB 3189 AND HB 3191, funding for Arts & Culture and Capital Projects.

Oregon is known for the breadth of its philanthropic culture, both public and private.

Nowhere is there a more important agency for arts and culture than the Oregon Arts Commission helping every citizen benefit from the wide distribution of funding for artistic creation, expression and awareness through the annual grants to the County Cultural Coalitions managed by local committees. The committees actively seek grant requests for creative ideas and support cultural programming and art events in small or remote communities, as varied as bus tours by a nonprofit historical society for the elderly or disabled into the Steen's mountains or a summer chalk art celebration for young and old alike to decorate Main Street sidewalks.

Oregon's commitment to the arts and culture as an important public good is also realized through the biennial CREF funding, authorized by the Legislature based on recommendations from the Cultural Advocacy Coalition. CREF underwrites some of the largest projects throughout the State that provide access to opportunities for growth of art- and culture-focused venues in our frontier communities as well as in large population centers. The CREF slate of 14 projects this year reaches from Astoria to Wallowa County. It includes museum renovation and expansion projects as well as the continued development of a unique cultural interpretation site tracing the history and lived experience of the Black population in an isolated logging town, to name a few. Our project in the slate is the Baker Orpheum Theater request for foundation work to stabilize an historic building in the heart of Baker City's Main Street tourist area, being renovated as a quality performing arts center for Baker, where none exists, to support its schools, nonprofit theater, orchestras and choirs.

Oregon also promotes citizen investment in bringing art and culture at every level to every Oregonian through the Oregon Cultural Tax Credit. Up to \$500 donation to the Oregon Cultural Trust matched by donations made to any Oregon arts & cultural non-profit is taken off the tax bill.

From a county with a small population where all this support makes a difference to our way of life, I ask your support of HB 3189 to increase funding for the Oregon Arts Commission work and HB 3191 to fund the CREF slate of capital projects for the next biennium.

Thank you for these outstanding programs that make Oregon such a wonderful place to live.

Sincerely, Aletha Bonebrake,

Retired County Librarian and Oregon resident for 40 years.
Eastern Oregon Regional Theater, Vice President
Baker Orpheum Theater Capital Project, Chair
Board Member, Baker County Cultural Coalition