

Testimony to and in reference to:

House Committee on Economic Development

RE: HB 2052, Oregon Cultural Trust

Extends sunset for tax credit for contributions to Trust for Cultural Development Account.

Roots of the River Oregon:

Extend the Sunset

—*for* HB 2052, Oregon Cultural Trust

The name says it all: Cultural Trust.

Many beauties made by many are in our trust.

If we don't trust in who we are, what can we do?

If we don't create, celebrate, and learn the ways

of inventive making, how can commerce thrive,

rooted as it is in inspiration's spark woven to persistence?

When the Governor named me poet of the land and sent me to testify for lyric making in John Day, Burns, and the Alvord, with new Citizens in Salem, Veterans in Portland, Prisoners in Umatilla, readers and writers in Klamath country, Bend, Gold Beach, The Dalles and Pendleton, and with students everywhere, I saw our prosperity sustained by each citizen's heritage of discovery in art and culture.

Oregon democracy works by counting votes, but those votes have meaning only when the voter's voice is wise, informed, and playful in ways learned from art—each syllable a drop of rain, each dab of paint, each dancer's step, each fiddler's stroke, each stitch of embroidery another dash of bountiful rain filling our precious River Oregon with abundance, balance, and thoughtful purpose.

How shall this be if not by trust? Extend the sunset and let good work be done by art and culture so each community shall be more open, emotionally-informed, and wise. Our festive work of lively generation is just begun. The Cultural Trust is tax by choice, by generosity, by gift, giving each citizen a way to say *This is my Oregon*.

—Kim Stafford
Oregon Poet Laureate