



February 7, 2019

House Committee on Economic Development

RE: HB 2132, Oregon Cultural Trust

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

Dear Committee Members,

As the Executive Director of Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT), I am writing to express our desire to see the sunset for the existing tax credit for contributions to the Trust for Cultural Development extended for an additional 6 years.

Oregon Ballet Theatre is one of the five anchor arts organizations in Portland and the largest professional ballet company in the State. As an independent 501(c)(3) with a volunteer Board of 26 members and engaging over 250 staff, artists, and volunteers, OBT fulfills our mission to share, inspire, and connect to our community through dance through many channels. Our professional company puts on over 40 performances per year, reaching over 70,000 audience members from around the State. Oregon Ballet Theatre School educates over 600 students per year, including nearly \$100,000 worth of scholarship awardees from socio-economic or otherwise marginalized communities. Our students come from all over the state and our Summer Intensive pulls students nationally and internationally. Our education outreach program is active in several school districts across the State, focusing on Title I and other communities with historical inequities in regard to arts access. Last year this group visited cities from Astoria to Hood River and engaged over 40,000 audience members and participants. Throughout its 30 year history, OBT has been a standard bearer for dance in the State and that work is made possible, in part, by the existence of the Oregon Cultural Trust.

As a direct recipient of Cultural Trust funding through the Cultural Development grants, OBT has been able to produce our first all-female choreographer program, tour our junior company (OBT2) to Lincoln City, Hood River, and Astoria, and program OBT Exposed, which gave free access to the public to see OBT train and rehearse in an open, outdoor venue. Together, these programs reached over 27,500 Oregonians. All because of funding from the Trust.

As someone who is relatively new to the State, I can personally say that this program is unique. It is a way for the State to show their continued support for its cultural non-profits, while continuing to allow Oregonians a tax-beneficial way to support the cultural environment they love.



Thank you for your consideration of this 6 year extension and thank you for your leadership. I enjoy being part of a community with such strong support of this sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Greer", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Greer

Executive Director, Oregon Ballet Theatre  
207-808-3328  
michael.greer@obt.org