

The John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts

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April 3, 2019

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To the House Committee on Revenue

re: support for HB 2132

Dear Chair Nathanson and Committee Members:

I write in support HB 2132 to extend the tax credit for contributions to the Oregon Cultural Trust.

I have been a resident of Lane County since 1971. I am a co-founder of the 28 year old John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts and am a long-time supporter of arts and cultural institutions throughout Oregon. I was also member of the team to create the guidelines for Lane County Cultural Coalition.

I have to admit I was very dubious when the Cultural Trust was first proposed – especially when it wasn't fully funded with the promised sale of surplus land.

But I have happily had my concerns proven to be unfounded. The OCT has become a great equalizer with statewide vision and reach. A particularly brilliant feature of the Trust's design is the funds distribution through the County Coalitions. This distribution allows for local tailoring in response to local initiatives and opportunities, while promoting the value that all Oregonians thrive as a result of a healthy and vital cultural and arts scene statewide.

Two examples of the impact that OCT has had on Lane County through Shedd grants include one smaller Coalition grant that helped expand our weekly sing-along program for people with dementia into an additional memory care facility. "Unforgettable", as we call this award-winning program, is changing the notion of truly *active* life-long participation in music-making.

Second, a recent major, \$40,000, OCT grant has assisted The Shedd to install "hearing loop" hearing assist systems in what ultimately will be all 3 of our performance venues and an additional 18 meeting and classrooms throughout our 70,000 square foot facility. This critical new access for our constituents of all ages with mild to severe hearing loss (up to 50% in the 55+ year old age group) is also changing lives. People who have been isolated for years due to their hearing loss are now able to access live music and the spoken word once again. "State of the art" *fm* and infrared systems don't work. Loops do – and are vastly preferred by those with hearing loss. [**The Hearing Review: Consumer Perceptions of the Impact of Inductively Looped Venues, 2014.**]

Inductive hearing loops are required by many countries and several US states in all public places – including such services as taxi cabs. As a spin-off of our initiative, The

The mission of The Shedd Institute is to be an education and performance center where people find and nurture community through discovery, creation and celebration.

Shedd has launched a “Loop Lane County” committee comprised of advocates both with and without hearing loss. One of our members also launched a new loop installation company and has already installed systems in several churches and senior residences. Other venues – from restaurants to doctor’s offices to performance centers and airports – are looking into adding this significant form of access for Oregonians with what is known as “the hidden disability”.

I tell you all of this to demonstrate that the Oregon Cultural Trust is instrumental in these sorts of initiatives and “ripple effect” changes that enrich the lives of all Oregonians.

The Board and patrons of The Shedd Institute strongly support the extension of the OCT through HB 2132.

Sincerely,



Ginevra Ralph, Director of Education/Stewardship

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