



2020 Auburn Ave Baker City, OR 97814 541-523-5369 [ginger@crossroads-arts.org](mailto:ginger@crossroads-arts.org) [www.crossroads-arts.org](http://www.crossroads-arts.org)

The Honorable Janelle Bynum  
Chair, House Committee on Economic  
Development and Small Business  
Oregon Legislature  
Salem, Oregon. 97301

**RE: H.B. 2459**

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee:

Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, serving Rural Baker County Oregon, is asking for your support of House Bill 2459 for \$50M in Recovery funding for the Arts, Culture, Heritage, and Humanities sector.

While so many sectors of the Oregon economy are rebounding from the challenges of the Covid Pandemic, arts and culture continues to lag.

Even in rural Eastern Oregon, our First Friday Gallery openings have not returned to previous attendance levels. While we are seeing some minor improvement in our education programs, our gallery sales in 2022 were down 28%. Our rural community is so dependent on Travel and Tourism, and we continue to see significant lower numbers of guests.

Our sector is facing the challenges of our grantmaking partners desire to return to normal. They want us to get back to traditional programming and we are trying our absolute best as we navigate continued health challenges (the triple pandemic of Covid, RSV and Flu) continue to keep people home. As families "catch up" on delayed summer traveling it is slowly dismantling long held youth arts programs. Costs are driving up expenses at every aspect of arts organizations- Crossroads had a 27% increase in expense.

Yet we had a 47% decrease in contributed income. When gas, food and utilities take up more of the average family paycheck cuts in the average family budget must occur. Arts, Culture, Heritage and Humanities are key economic driver for the state's economy, and we critically need additional support as we hope that inflation will slow and lower.

Like all industries we are facing higher labor costs if you can get labor. Arts is "supply" dependent-- making costs soar and in the case of performing arts, they still face continued health and safety costs that are not being experienced by other sectors. The investment in arts with HB 2459 will assure that our museum partners will not be left behind and that our critical anchor arts organizations receive critical funds. The recent news from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the difficult cuts they had to make demonstrate that new investment in the arts is critically needed. We need your help!

Thank you-

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ginger Savage".

Ginger Savage, Executive Director Crossroads Carnegie Art Center

Board Member- Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon

Committee Member, Baker County Cultural Coalition and Baker County Historical Society