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Oregon Humanities

January 25, 2023

Dear Chair Bynum and members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business,

I'm writing as the executive director of Oregon Humanities, a cultural non-profit that works across the state, primarily in partnership with other small- and mid-sized cultural non-profits, to thank you in advance for your consideration of the bill to provide \$50m to support the continued recovery and reinvention of the arts and culture sector.

In my role at Oregon Humanities, I have become well-acquainted with hundreds of cultural organizations across the state, from theaters in North Portland to libraries in Prineville to literary organizations in the Willows to historical societies in Garibaldi to community radio stations in the Illinois Valley, and many more. I have seen just how crucial these organizations are to the civic and economic fabric of their communities—and I have also seen how much COVID and its effects have tested these organizations and the communities they serve.

My own organization has also been tested by COVID and its effects. Like so many organizations, we have seen numbers of in-person attendees at our programs remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, and we have had to adjust staffing and hiring accordingly.

You are no doubt adjudicating between many worthwhile claims, so I will keep this short and clear: additional targeted support in this moment for cultural organizations in Oregon would mean a great deal to the sector as a whole and to Oregon Humanities' own efforts to contribute to a state that invites diverse perspectives, explores challenging questions, and strives for just communities. Our work prioritizes partnership with and support of rural communities and communities of color, and it contributes to a culture of belonging that serves as the foundation for the democracy that you are helping administer.

Thank you again for your dedication, work, and consideration.



Adam Davis
Executive Director, Oregon Humanities