

David Schmitz

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Representatives Grayber, Lewis, Tran and members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government and Veterans:

I am writing as a board member of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition, a citizen and a resident of Jackson County to express my support for HB 2498 which creates the Oregon Cultural Impact Program as a part of the Oregon Cultural Trust. This critical bill fulfills the promise the Oregon Legislature made when the Oregon Cultural Trust was established by dedicating \$200 million in lottery bonding capacity to the corpus of the Oregon Cultural Trust. This would eventually create earnings which will be given out statewide through grants to nonprofits that qualify for OCT/OAC funding – of which there are over 1,600 to date.

This program is called the Cultural Impact Program (CIP) but it could also be known as the Cultural Promise — there was always supposed to be public funds in this unique-to-the nation program and they were to come from the sale of public lands. Unfortunately, that never happened. The \$30 million in the corpus today has come through the tax credit offered to Oregonians to help build donations. While that credit is important and should be retained in order to continue to build the fund for the future, the initial promise must be fulfilled.

The arts are the emergency response mechanisms for the soul. They heal unseen wounds in our collective psyche and show Oregonians new paths experience, paths filled with empathy, justice and the creativity of the human spirit. If that weren't enough, the arts also have a significant economic impact in our State. The most recent data (from 2015) shows that the arts have an outsized impact on our economy, with more than \$687 million in annual economic activity. The arts also support more than 22,000 jobs in our state, generate more than \$469 million in household income to local residents and deliver \$53 million in local and state government revenue.

HB 2498 is an investment that fulfills the initial promise made by the legislature in the psyche of our state as well as the economic vitality of our communities. This session lottery bonding capacity is at an unusual high point – it is the right time to complete this promise. I urge you to support HB 2498.

Sincerely,



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