

April 14, 2023

City of Newport Testimony

Re: Creation of Newport Culture District

Joint Committee on Ways & Means

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner & Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means:

Welcome to Newport! For the record, I am City Councilor Cynthia Jacobi representing the City of Newport.

I am pleased to know that both Senator Anderson and Representative Gomberg are on Oregon's first ever arts and culture caucus. I was delighted to learn from the February 8 radio interview, Senator Anderson, fully supports SB 5506, which provides financial support for establishing Arts and Culture Districts. I speak to support the selection of Newport as a one of these pilot projects. On behalf of the City of Newport, I request that the Ways & Means Committee consider an appropriation of \$150,000 with the City of Newport providing \$50,000 for this pilot project.

We have a firm foundation in place - from the Performing Arts Center to the Visual Arts Center, theater and dance companies, numerous art classes through the community college, the Yaquina Arts Association, the Art Bus, a youth arts program financed by an annual Nye Beach Banner project, and a multitude of classes at the Visual Arts Center, some contained within the Paper and Book Arts Festival now in progress this weekend. The City of Newport has a strong Public Arts Committee, while a separate independent Public Arts Foundation is in the formation process. The Pacific Marine History Museum on the Bayfront adds to the mix.

We know visitors to Lincoln County specifically, spend on average \$93.95 per person (*excluding* the cost of admission) at arts and cultural events. The average between visitors and locals, if you prefer, is \$41.67 per person per event. In 2015 that equated to \$10.4million in economic activity for Lincoln County.

This combination is a huge economic driver reaching across our entire county. With additional supportive funds, it can grow. This will further strengthen our tourist economy on the central coast.

Senator Anderson you said that one of your main concerns is accountability for state funds. I agree.

If Newport is chosen to receive this pilot project, I believe there will full accountability from all of the established organizations I listed. I believe that Newport will be an example that can help show the way to other rural communities about the value of arts and culture to strengthen local economics and enhance the quality of life for our residents.

On merit, I ask that Newport become one of the newly designated Arts and Culture Districts. We will not disappoint you.