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April 28, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Girod and Representative Holvey  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Salem, Oregon. 97301

RE: CREF Slate 2023-25

Dear Co-Chairs Girod, Holvey and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are delighted you have scheduled time to review the slate of cultural projects that have come forth from across Oregon for consideration for Cultural Resource Economic Funds (CREF).

We are thrilled with the breadth and depth of this slate from a geographic point of view, as well as size and scope of the projects, and the diversity of mediums showcased in this collective group. We urge your support for \$11.8 million to be spread across 16 capital projects that will provide increased access to creativity in communities all across our state.

We begin our endorsement process in the spring of the year before each long legislative session by publishing a statewide call for projects that are seeking a state investment. We have rigorous criteria that cover everything from land ownership to fundraising success, from community and economic impact, to community and policymaker support. A volunteer committee of our board members conduct an in-depth peer review of each project and those that emerge are those that we consider "most ready" for state investment. We overlay an equity and geographic lens in our process and we provide active consultation to organizations to help them navigate the review.

We represent over 350 members across Oregon from individual artists to large organizations like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, from tribal coalitions to historic properties, from traveling civics exhibits to place-based restorations. We know the power of creativity to build communities and collective understanding. We know the economic impacts that arts and culture bring to our state through tourism, event attendance and scholarly study.

This sector has been among the hardest hit from the pandemic and recovery continues. Helping communities with showcasing their treasures will benefit so many in a myriad of ways.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

J.S. May, Chairman, CACO