

Submitter: Ariel Reker

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital
Construction

Measure: HB5030

House Bill 5030 Section 12 as it is proposed significantly increases the amount of proceeds of lottery bonds to be collected and distributed for the purpose of the Oregon Main Street

Revitalization Grant Program Fund. This grant fund provides grants that create jobs, further economic development, and enhance the economic vitality of historic downtowns and local communities by supporting projects that revitalize historic downtown commercial districts, redevelop and reuse existing buildings, facilitate small business relocation and expansion initiatives, and provide assistance, training, and technical services.

For small, rural communities like Baker City - which I am a part of - this increase would double the amount of progress on rehabilitating, renovating, and preserving their historic downtowns in a shorter amount of time. We would be able to do both large-scale and small-scale revitalization regularly - thus improving our historic structures and injecting them with a much more significant amount of economic development too. Currently, this is the only downtown revitalization money outside private investment that is available in Baker City. We have one of the largest and most intact historic downtowns in the entire Pacific Northwest. Without significant more funding, we likely will not be able to save all our current buildings. In Baker, we are racing against the clock with incredibly limited resources - increasing the amount for the grant would change that.

The grant requires at least a 30% match - preferably cash. The amount of private investment that partners with public investment is huge - and largely bipartisan I would hope. For example, Baker City's 2023 applicant will have invested over \$900,000 of their own funds to revitalize the building - the \$200,000 grant will simply help them finish the project. However, we had another eight applicants that we had to turn away - along with private investment estimated for over \$880,000. Some of the projects may happen without the support of the grant, but most likely will not. Baker City is motivated and ready to put these funds to use - we just need the support of the grant fund to do so!

Another benefit is that funding these projects helps train and create expertise on revitalization of historic structures with local contractors, sub-contractors, and crews. This is not insignificant. Historic structures require special considerations and training that can now be marketed for other projects throughout Oregon and beyond. It's not just an economic driver for a specific building or business, it's for the entire

community.

Thank you for reading this testimony and I hope Baker City can count on all of you to support House Bill 5030 Section 12.