



February 6, 2024,

Honorable Janelle Bynum, Chair
Honorable Ed Diehl and Daniel Nguyen, Vice Chairs and Committee Members
House Committee on Economic Development and small business
Oregon Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support HB 4124 - Arts/Culture/Heritage Funding for Capital and Resiliency.

We urge you to support HB 4124 as it seeks to accomplish two critical items - fund the 14 projects remaining on the Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF) slate and provides a onetime investment that infuses the arts/culture/heritage sector with increased resiliency. With \$27 million in funding, this bill will boost local economies and achieve incredible leverage of this investment as the arts/culture/heritage sector as a major economic driver and jobs producer in our State.

As caretakers and trustees of Suomi Hall, located in Astoria Oregon we are critically aware of the need for more investment in the culture and heritage sector of our state. We are also aware of how these funds could directly help non-profits such as ours.

Suomi Hall has long been a gathering place for the lower Columbia River community, not only for people with Finnish ancestry but for all community members. Built in 1893 on the hill above the current location, Suomi Hall was moved in 1910 to its Uniontown home on the river. It was turned around, raised up one floor and a addition added on the east side. Time has taken its toll on our Hall and we find ourselves faced with the enormous task to save this important part of history.

If funds were made available by the state for heritage and cultural projects, it could be an avenue for funding critical structural work for our historic structure, and we know that we are absolutely not alone in this need.

We appreciate the ability to provide this testimony in strong support of HB 4124. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and support this legislation.

Sincerely,
Friends of Suomi Hall, Board of Trustees

President, Leila Collier
Vice President, Madeline Matson
Secretary, Jane Hill
Treasure, Faith Swanson
Financial Secretary, Katie Ryding
Trustees: Carole Lyngstad, Marvin Hautala, Eric B. Williams, Peggy Nikkila, Helen Pitkanen