

Submitter: Sherry Evans

On Behalf Of: Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB4124

Good afternoon, Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Evans, secretary of the board for the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum. I am writing to you today to tell you about our museum and to ask for your support of

HB 4124 to help us complete our building project of the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum (ROHM).

The museum began in 2015 around a kitchen table with 6 people who each put down about \$25 to start the necessary paper work to create a non-profit organization.

Later, the City of Rainier allowed us to start housing our collections in one room on the 3rd floor of City Hall. Now the museum has grown to nine volunteer board members, all of whom have donated \$1,000 or more to the building fund, 290 members, and 40 volunteers. We have many more items now than we had in our 2015 beginning, several of which are housed in other locations until we have room to display them in our new museum. Through fundraisers, grants, and generous private and corporate donors, we currently need only about 25% more of our total building cost to complete the museum.

Rainier is a small community on the Columbia River, across the bridge from Longview and Kelso, Washington. We have very few arts and cultural opportunities for our residents, and very few gathering places for community events. We believe that a new museum building will be advantageous for our community by providing a space for our community to view Rainier's historical items, as well as a place where people can come for special events. It will provide another reason for people to stop at this little town on the mighty Columbia River, and help them know about Rainier's restaurants, parks, and proximity to other special places in this area, including Mt. St. Helens, Days in the Park, Logging events, and gateway roads to the coast and the mountains.

As we will have other board members testifying next Tuesday, Feb.13, at the carry-over testimony time, I will highlight our connections to the youth of Rainier. As a retired educator and a reluctant history learner myself, I can testify to the difficulty of getting young people interested in history. I think it is just so distant and difficult for children to relate to history, so they feel like, "What's the point? That's not about me or my life". But one of the ways that we have enjoyed giving young people a chance to interact with history, hands-on, is to invite school classes to come to the museum for field trips, and to allow them to learn about and interact with some specific items in the museum. They can hypothesize what each item is for, they can do an activity and ask questions. They can share their own experiences about an item that is used

now days and how that item is the same or different than the museum's items of the past. It is a simple encounter but we have found it to be quite meaningful and fun for the students, as well as for ourselves. We are also currently looking into expanding our interactions with the high school history classes and club.

We hope that you will support the many important arts and cultural organizations that have been thoroughly reviewed, vetted, and chosen by the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon(CACO). They have worked hard to create this slate of organizations so people all over Oregon may live fuller lives through access to arts and cultural opportunities.

Thank you for serving our state as legislators, and for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Sincerely,

Sherry Evans, Secretary

Rainier Oregon Historical Museum