

Submitter: Sue Densmore
On Behalf Of: Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure: SB1582

February 10,2024 Testimony—SB1582

Chair Taylor and Committee members

My name is Sue Densmore, I am the Executive Director of the Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau and I reside in Ashland, OR – and as I often say – in my car as this work means I travel regularly to the Monument – over two hours away. I am coming to you today from Washington DC where I have been testifying on Capital Hill on behalf of our wonderful Cultural programs in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration of SB1582 and support for important facilities throughout Oregon that bring jobs, economic vitality, joy, build community and offer wonderful family experiences. Part of what makes Oregon - Oregon.

From the beginning in 1909 – it was always a part of the plan to have lodging at the Oregon Caves. Now one of the Three GREAT LODGES of Oregon. The thinking is that it would bring a strong viable economic prosperity to rural Josephine county. That has proven to be the case 89 years later. Research from Dean Runyon and Associates – an overnight traveler has great value as their average expenditures are higher and their impact is more concentrated to the communities surrounding the lodging property.

On average each year, Oregon Caves bring 72 to 120,000 visitors, who take a cave tour, 20,000 who have one of the best milkshakes anywhere and 6000 overnight guests. The median household income in Cave Junction – the closest community of 1,100 people - is 29,000 whereas the State of Oregon is \$68,000. So 75 jobs in this tiny community supports 75 families and brings around 5 million a year into the area and 6.5 million to the region.

The CREF project we have in this bill is to restore 97 interior and exterior doors, hardware, and screens on this iconic, 25 room National Historic Landmark Lodge. This will assure security, and fire protection as well as maintain the historic value of the lodge. The NPS is underway to complete seismic, structural repairs, replace electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems and making the lodge accessible with 5 modified rooms.

So I am asking for your support for all 14 – carefully vetted CREF projects. Thanks to your support you will be able visit the Clatsop County Film Museum, then the High Desert Museum, go to a performance at the Tomorrow Theater in Portland, visit John Day and the Kam Wah Chung Heritage site, support the Black United Fund and so many more. Be sure to come to the Oregon Caves to tour, hike, rest, relax and stay the night and enjoy the best milkshake you will ever have at the Oregon Caves Chateau.

Thank you again for your time.

