

February 13, 2024

Oregon Legislature
House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business
Salem, Oregon

RE: HB 4124

Dear Chair Bynum and Committee Members:

We're asking for your support and advocacy on HB 4124 which funds cultural groups in Oregon. HB 4124 includes funding for 14 cultural capital projects around Oregon, one of them being a new library in Grants Pass in southern Oregon.

Josephine Community Library purchased downtown property for a new building last summer by raising \$2 million from individual and business donors as well as from grant funders. This modern library, with up-to-date technology and meeting space, will be a true community anchor, not only stimulating neighboring businesses but also helping Josephine County job seekers gain essential skills, create resumes, apply for jobs, and expand their life chances and those of their families.

HB 4124 would provide \$424,603 from the Cultural Resource Economic Fund (CREF) to pay for the initial architecture and engineering phases essential to the library building project.

The New Grants Pass Library is envisioned as a new two-story library building on a downtown city block that will be a centralized space accessible to all residents. The interior will include a dedicated technology area, a children's area, a teen area, a multipurpose meeting room, and a bookstore. The new 30,000-square-foot space will be owned by the library and replace the overcrowded and inadequate 65-year-old 15,000-square-foot space currently leased from the county.

We invite you to learn more about the New Grants Pass Library project at jclfoundation.org/grants-pass and josephinelibrary.org/about-the-library.

HB 4124 includes 13 other important cultural capital projects around the state, mostly smaller projects in rural areas like ours. The CREF program has elevated Oregon in so many ways, from economic activity to building a vibrant cultural ecosystem across this state. The small state investment from CREF leverages impact that has significant ripple effects throughout the communities and the state. Please prioritize this investment as well as the resiliency funds for our nonprofit organizations still struggling to rebuild after the pandemic.

Contact either of us at 541-476-0571. Thank you for all you do for the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Stoltz, Executive Director
Josephine Community Library Foundation



Kate Lasky, Library Director
Josephine Community Library District