



January 28, 2025

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 3190, which reinstates Oregon's special assessment for historic properties program.

At Britt Music & Art Festival, we are not only committed to bringing world-class music and arts to Southern Oregon but also to preserving and enhancing the cultural and historic character of our community. This commitment is exemplified by our recent acquisition of the historic U.S. Hotel in Jacksonville, Oregon. Built in 1880, the U.S. Hotel is one of the region's most iconic commercial properties, a symbol of Jacksonville's rich heritage, and a source of pride for our community.

Our vision for the U.S. Hotel is to revitalize this historic gem, transforming it into a space that the entire community can enjoy. With its restoration, we hope to provide a gathering place that honors Jacksonville's past while creating opportunities for cultural events, local businesses, and tourism. But like so many other historic properties across the state, the costs of preservation are substantial, and programs like the one proposed in HB 3190 are essential to ensuring that properties like the U.S. Hotel can thrive for future generations.

Research consistently shows that communities that invest in their heritage experience tremendous benefits. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, historic commercial properties attract more visitors and bolster local economies. They create opportunities for small businesses, foster local pride, and strengthen community identity. In Jacksonville, this is especially evident, as its well-preserved historic district draws thousands of visitors every year, driving tourism and supporting small businesses across Southern Oregon.

However, without tools like the special assessment program, the future of many historic properties remains uncertain. Restoring and maintaining these properties is expensive, and many communities and organizations cannot shoulder these costs alone. HB 3190 provides the

necessary support to ensure these properties remain assets, not liabilities, to their communities.

For Britt, revitalizing the U.S. Hotel represents more than just preserving a building—it is about enriching the fabric of Jacksonville and providing a place where community members and visitors alike can gather, create, and celebrate. Passage of HB 3190 will allow organizations like ours to continue investing in Oregon’s heritage and ensuring our historic properties remain vibrant and valuable parts of our towns and cities.

On behalf of Britt Music & Arts Festival, I urge you to support HB 3190 and help ensure that Oregon’s historic properties continue to enrich our communities, stimulate our economies, and preserve our shared history. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Abby McKee

*Executive Director, Britt Music & Arts Festival*