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House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3191 – Funding for Cultural Capital Projects

Dear Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lydia Heins, and I serve as the Executive Director of Coos Art Museum. I write in strong support of HB 3191, which provides critical capital funding for cultural institutions across the state.

Every year, Coos Art Museum exhibits artwork from high school students in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties in collaboration with Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC). Awards are given to a selection of works, with the top three winners receiving a full-tuition scholarship to SWOCC. Many of these students never imagined themselves pursuing higher education, let alone being recognized for their artistic talents. This program not only fosters student confidence but also opens doors to new opportunities and broadens career prospects, demonstrating how cultural organizations contribute to community and economic development.

However, our ability to continue hosting exhibitions, providing educational programs, and fostering creative growth depends on a facility that is safe, accessible, and welcoming. Coos Art Museum's REFRESH capital campaign addresses critical infrastructure needs—modernizing aging facilities, improving accessibility, and creating a dynamic space for artists, students, and visitors. With state investment, we can continue serving our region and inspiring future generations.

Cultural organizations are economic drivers, hubs for education, and vital spaces for connection. They shape town identities, strengthen local economies, and enhance quality of life. Arts and culture contribute over \$687 million annually to Oregon's economy, yet many rural institutions lack the resources to maintain and improve their facilities.

The full slate of capital projects in HB 3191 ensures that cultural organizations across Oregon, including those in rural communities, receive the resources they need to thrive. A strong cultural sector means a stronger Oregon, so I urge the Committee to support HB 3191 and help sustain the vital work of cultural organizations statewide.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to ensuring Oregon's cultural institutions continue to thrive for future generations.

Sincerely,
Lydia Heins
Executive Director, Coos Art Museum

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