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Dear Cultural Resources Economic Fund Review Panel,

As a lifelong resident of Astoria, and an educator with our public school system, it is with great weight I write this letter. The Columbia River Maritime Museum and the Education Program have been invaluable assets to my classroom and students. I know any educator in my district would wholeheartedly agree with such a statement.

I have been privileged to host Columbia River Maritime Museum Educators in my classroom for over a decade, and I have been impressed with the professionalism, enthusiasm, and diligence with which they work to meet the needs of teachers and students. They not only provide interesting and fun topics for students to study, but they manage to do so while supporting our Oregon state STEAM standards. My students are eager to learn from this team and they are bursting with excitement each time they have such an opportunity to do so, whether that be in our classrooms at school or on-site at the CRMM Campus. In a time in which school districts are struggling to maintain healthy budgets, and STEAM opportunities are taking a hit in the education sector, the ability of the CRMM Education Team to support our public schools is more imperative than ever.

The opportunity to better engage with our young community on topics that will undoubtedly spur student interest in STEAM is part of the reason the CRMM Campus needs Mariners Hall. With classroom or learning space being highly limited on the current campus, it would be a game changer for our students and educators when they visit the museum for educational programming. By supporting this building campaign, you are supporting the future of our community. The museum serves multiple counties full of students that otherwise lack exposure to and experience with such awesome STEAM programming and exhibits. The Columbia River Maritime Museum is working to fill a desperate need our community, they are helping public schools with the heavy lifting when it comes to STEAM education. My job is made easier thanks to the incredible support of the Columbia River Maritime Museum and Education Program. It would be foolhardy to not give them complete support in return as they seek to better serve our young people.

The youth and the public educators of our community need you to support this endeavor. It will change the dynamics of education programming that CRMM can provide to our community and will only bring about positive interactions with STEAM subjects that our students so desperately need and crave.

Sincerely,

Melissa Funk

Melissa Funk
Educator, Astoria School District
President, Astoria Education Association