



ASTORIA  
WARRENTON  
*The Spirit of the Columbia*

Cultural Resources Economic Fund  
Salem, OR

July 9, 2024

Dear Review Panel:

The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce is a 600-member business association that also serves as our communities' destination management organization and visitor center operator. As such, we work daily in areas of local economic development, community livability, tourism marketing, destination development, and visitor experience.

Museums play a significant role in each of those arenas here. The Columbia River Maritime Museum (CRMM), especially, plays an outsized role in serving visitors to our community while enhancing livability and opportunities for our residents.

The revitalization of the Columbia River Maritime Museum's main building some 22 years ago marked a true renaissance of Astoria's downtown and waterfront. A 2013 renovation of the adjacent train depot further cemented the museum as a central piece of Astoria's story and character.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum and its people serve a central role in the culture of this community. They do so by providing a community gathering place, providing unique learning opportunities, interpreting and preserving the maritime heritage that continues to define us, and contributing mightily to the local economy and culture. It's hard to imagine Astoria without CRMM at the heart of our waterfront.

Current plans for a new building, Mariners Hall, at the museum are widely and enthusiastically supported here. This new building will give light to the amazing collection of artifacts currently housed in archive storage, vastly increase capacity for education and entertainment of visitors and locals alike, and further fulfill the city's riverfront vision. We at the chamber are anxious to see it completed.

We appreciate the panel's consideration of funding for this project through phase one, and urge you to recommend it for state capital projects funding in phase two. Doing so supports our overall community and economic future and preserves and grows the opportunities available for rural Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration.

David L. Reid, Executive Director

CHAMBER of COMMERCE