



February 17, 2025

Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chairs Diehl & Isadore, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Abby McKee, and I am the CEO of Britt Music & Arts Festival in Jacksonville, Oregon. I am writing in strong support of HB 3189, which allocates \$10 million to the Oregon Arts Commission. This investment is critical to ensuring that arts and culture remain a cornerstone of our state's economic vitality, education system, and community well-being.

At Britt, we witness firsthand how the arts strengthen our economy and enrich the lives of Oregonians. As the Pacific Northwest's oldest outdoor summer concert festival, Britt brings world-class musicians to Southern Oregon, attracting tens of thousands of visitors each year. These attendees don't just support our organization—they fuel the local economy by staying in hotels, dining in restaurants, shopping in local stores, and engaging with other attractions like sports tourism, wineries, and more. The economic ripple effect of arts programming extends far beyond the stage, sustaining small businesses and creating jobs in rural communities like ours. Britt attendees generate an estimated 80-90% of all restaurant business in our community and the lion's share of transient lodging. Statewide, arts organizations drive over \$687 million of economic activity and support nearly 23,000 jobs.

The Oregon Arts Commission plays a crucial role in supporting organizations like Britt by providing grants, resources, and advocacy that enable us to sustain our programming and grow to meet the needs of our communities. For many arts organizations, especially in rural areas, state funding is a lifeline that allows us to offer accessible, high-quality arts experiences. The impact of these investments, while critical to major metropolitan areas, is perhaps even more essential in small towns where arts programs generate an outsized percentage of tourism, bring communities together, support local economies, and enhance quality of life.

HB 3189 is more than just an appropriation—it is a highly lucrative investment and a statement that Oregon values creativity, culture, and community. The arts inspire innovation, drive tourism, and provide young people with opportunities for self-expression and learning. By investing in the Oregon Arts Commission, you are investing in the future of our state.

I urge you to support HB 3189 and ensure that Oregon remains a place where arts and culture thrive. Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A McKee", is written over a light blue circular background.

Abby McKee

President & CEO, Britt Music & Arts Festival