



February 17, 2025

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

My name is Gabriella Calicchio, and I have the privilege of serving as the Executive Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 3189, which allocates \$10 million in funding to the Oregon Arts Commission.

For nearly 90 years, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has been a cornerstone of Oregon's arts and cultural landscape, attracting audiences from across the country and around the world. As one of the largest regional theater companies in the nation, OSF not only enriches lives through storytelling and artistic expression but also serves as a significant economic driver for Southern Oregon and the state as a whole.

The impact of Oregon's arts and cultural sector cannot be overstated. According to the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study conducted by Americans for the Arts, Oregon's nonprofit arts and culture industry generated \$829.3 million in economic activity in 2022 alone. This sector supported 13,061 jobs and contributed \$559.5 million in personal income to Oregon residents while generating \$155.3 million in tax revenue for local, state, and federal governments. These numbers demonstrate the vital role that the arts play in Oregon's economy, and why continued investment in this sector is crucial.

HB 3189 is not just an investment in arts organizations; it is an investment in Oregon's economy and communities. The funding allocated to the Oregon Arts Commission will ensure that institutions like OSF and countless other cultural organizations can remain stable as they continue to navigate the lingering effects of the pandemic, rising operational costs, and shifting audience behaviors. Oregon's arts and culture sector is a powerful economic engine, driving tourism and business revenue across the state. In Ashland alone, OSF audiences contribute millions of dollars annually to local hotels, restaurants, and small businesses, demonstrating the ripple effect of a strong arts industry.

Beyond its economic impact, this funding is critical to expanding access to arts education and community engagement. The Oregon Arts Commission plays a key role in supporting programs that bring arts education into schools, create cultural opportunities for underserved communities, and ensure that Oregonians—regardless of income or geography—have access to the transformative power of artistic expression. The arts are not a luxury; they are an essential part of our identity as a state, providing joy, fostering community, and creating economic opportunity.

Simply put, investing in the arts is an investment in Oregon's future. OSF, along with our partners in the arts community, urges your support for HB 3189 to help sustain and grow our vibrant cultural sector.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Calicchio

Executive Director, Oregon Shakespeare Festival