

February 17, 2025

Representative Nguyen, Chair
Representatives Diehl and Isadore, Vice-Chairs
House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business and Trade
Oregon Legislature
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 3191, HB 3189

Dear Chair Nguyen, Vice Chairs Diehl and Isadore, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the High Desert Museum, we are writing to support House Bills 3191 and 3189. These bills support the arts and culture sector across Oregon in significant ways.

Oregon's legislature led the way during the pandemic to support the cultural sector—and we have a cultural ecosystem that has persevered because of this incredible support. To continue fostering all the benefits of a vibrant cultural sector, Oregon needs to invest in its future growth. Oregon's arts and culture sector contributes to the state's economy, quality of life, and community well-being. Economic contribution and economic impact data underscore the sector's role, generating thousands of jobs and driving revenue through employment, tourism, and consumer spending. Despite these contributions, Oregon ranks 41st nationally in per capita arts funding from the State. We do better by supporting HB 3191 and HB 3189.

Not only do these bills provide much needed funding for the Oregon Arts Commission to increase their grant capacity (HB 3189), they provide about \$9 million in funding capital improvements to organizations across the State (HB 3191)—from the Coos Art Museum to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, to the High Desert Museum. These capital projects have been thoroughly vetted through the CREF (Cultural Resources Economic Fund) process and have demonstrated their viability, economic impact and community support.

We urge you to send these bills to the Ways and Means Committee and make this strong commitment to Oregon's cultural sector.

Sincerely,



Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Sharon Gueck
Board Chair