

March 5, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for HB 3595 - Recognizing Lunar New Year as a State Holiday

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Pham, and members of the House Rules Committee:

On behalf of Lan Su Chinese Garden, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 3595, which would establish Lunar New Year as an official state holiday in Oregon.

Lan Su Chinese Garden is a world-class cultural and botanical garden in the heart of Portland's Old Town Chinatown. Since our founding, we have provided a space where the community can gather to celebrate the traditions, artistry, and history of Chinese culture - including our annual Lunar New Year festivities, which bring thousands of visitors to Portland's Old Town Chinatown.

Recognizing Lunar New Year as a state holiday is not only a meaningful acknowledgment of the diverse communities that call Oregon home, but also a step toward fostering inclusivity and cultural appreciation across the state. As over 130,000 Oregonians and one-fifth of the world's population celebrate this important holiday, formal recognition would:

- **Preserve and Celebrate Cultural Heritage** – At Lan Su Chinese Garden, Lunar New Year is a cornerstone celebration that brings the community together to honor centuries-old traditions of renewal, reflection, and family reunion. As a living expression of Chinese culture, Lan Su provides an authentic space for visitors to experience the beauty and significance of this holiday. UNESCO's recent recognition of the Spring Festival as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity underscores the importance of preserving and celebrating these traditions.
- **Strengthen Oregon's Cultural and Economic Landscape** – Lan Su's annual Lunar New Year festivities attract thousands of visitors, supporting local businesses, restaurants, and artisans while fostering a deeper appreciation for Chinese culture. Recognizing Lunar New Year as a state holiday would amplify its positive economic and cultural impact, encouraging broader participation and investment in Oregon's diverse communities.
- **Promote Inclusivity in Education and Public Life** – As a leading cultural institution, Lan Su is dedicated to education and cross-cultural understanding. This year, we welcomed over 800 students to experience Lunar New Year at the garden, providing an immersive learning opportunity about its history and traditions. Formal recognition of Lunar New Year would allow Oregon's students and public employees to fully engage in this significant holiday, deepening their connection to Chinese traditions without having to choose between cultural observance and their academic or professional responsibilities.

As neighboring states such as California, Washington, and Colorado have already taken this step, we urge Oregon to do the same in recognizing Lunar New Year's importance to our communities.

We thank Representative Dr. Tran and all supporting legislators for their leadership on HB 3595 and strongly encourage its passage. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional insight or support.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Nye
Executive Director
Lan Su Chinese Garden