



July 25, 2024

Columbia River Maritime Museum
1792 Marine Drive
Astoria, OR 97103

Dear Cultural Resources Economic Fund,

I am writing to express the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development Districts enthusiastic support for the Columbia River Maritime Museum's \$30 million expansion and transformation project and their request for grant funding from the Cultural Resource Economic Fund. This ambitious endeavor promises to significantly enhance the museum's capacity to serve the region and local community and visitors, providing numerous benefits to Northwest Oregon.

The planned remodeling of 11,000 square feet of existing galleries, alongside the creation of a new 24,000 square foot exhibit and education hall, will vastly improve the museum's offerings. This expansion will not only increase the space available for exhibits but will also provide state-of-the-art facilities for educational programs, making the museum a beacon of learning and cultural enrichment.

One of the most compelling reasons to support this project is its potential to strengthen the economy and livability of Northwest Oregon. The museum's expansion is expected to attract more visitors to the region, boosting local businesses and creating new job opportunities. This, in turn, will contribute to the overall economic vitality of Clatsop County.

Moreover, the museum's enhanced facilities will provide high-quality cultural and educational experiences for youth in a rural county. Access to such resources is essential for fostering a love of learning and supporting future academic success. The museum's programs will inspire and educate young minds, laying a strong foundation for their future endeavors.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum is already a cultural attraction that significantly contributes to the quality of life in Astoria and Clatsop County. By expanding and transforming the museum, we can ensure that it continues to be an attractive location to live, work, and play. This renovation will elevate the museum from an important regional institution to a world-class museum, drawing visitors from far and wide and enhancing Northwest Oregon's cultural landscape.

In conclusion, the Columbia River Maritime Museum's expansion and transformation project is a vital investment in the future of the Northwest Oregon community. ColPac wholeheartedly supports this initiative and their grant request, and look forward to witnessing the positive impact it will have on our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Colin Cooper".

Colin Cooper
Executive Director

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www.nworegon.org



Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Oregon Legislature
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Joint Committee On Ways and Means,

Consejo Hispano proudly supports the Columbia River Maritime Museum's Mariners Hall project. As an organization dedicated to empowering the Latinx community and fostering cultural inclusivity in the region, Consejo Hispano shares the Museum's vision of honoring and preserving the rich heritage of the Columbia River and its maritime legacy.

Astoria, situated on Chinookan land, boasts a diverse and resilient community deeply connected to the region's maritime history. From fishing and shipping to tourism and education, the maritime industry forms the backbone of our local economy and cultural identity. The Columbia River Maritime Museum has long been a cornerstone of this community, offering a space for education, storytelling, and connection. It has created a welcoming environment for all individuals, including students, families, and workers in the maritime industries—many of whom are part of the Latinx community Consejo Hispano serves.

The proposed Mariners Hall will expand the Museum's capacity to educate, engage, and inspire, while also providing opportunities for community-building and collaboration. This expansion will allow the Museum to better serve all residents of Astoria and the surrounding area, including immigrants, Indigenous peoples, and others who contribute to the vibrant mosaic of our community. By creating an inclusive space to celebrate and share stories of the river, the Mariners Hall will be a valuable resource for preserving history and fostering unity.

At Consejo Hispano, we have seen firsthand the importance of spaces that connect people through cultural and historical understanding. Investing in this project is an investment in Astoria's future—a future that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and our shared history on the Columbia River.

We encourage the Joint Committee On Ways and Means to support the Columbia River Maritime Museum's Mariners Hall project. Together, we can ensure that this vital institution continues to educate, inspire, and unite all who call Astoria home.

Sincerely,

Jenny Pool Radway
Executive Director
Consejo Hispano



Astoria Downtown Historic District Association

Encouraging community involvement and investment in preserving the character of historic downtown Astoria while promoting its health and future.

P.O. Box 261 · Astoria, OR 97103
www.astoriadowntown.com

25th July 2024

Re: Support for the Columbia River Maritime Museum Mariner's Hall Project

Dear Cultural Resources Economic Fund Review Panel,

The Astoria Downtown Historic Development Association (ADHDA) enthusiastically supports the Columbia River Maritime Museum's Mariner's Hall project. An accredited Main Street organization since 1986, ADHDA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve and advance historic downtown Astoria's culture and character through inspired partnerships, historic preservation and community engagement to support a vibrant and resilient economic future for all Astorians. We believe this project is in direct line with our mission.

Occupying Chinookan land and with a population of just over 10,000, Astoria's rural economy relies primarily on fishing, logging, manufacturing, art and tourism, resulting in a community that is resourceful and a working class that is proud of its maritime past, present and future. The Columbia River Maritime Museum has always exemplified this, serving not only as a museum, but as an educational center, tourist destination, workshop hub, research facility, library and lighthouse, if you will, of maritime heritage. It welcomes visitors, locals, veterans, Coast Guard families, students, educators, enthusiasts, individuals who work in the maritime industry, Indigenous peoples, and anyone who wishes to learn a little (or a lot) more about the maritime culture, art and history of where the Columbia River greets the Pacific Ocean.

Fundamental to Astoria's economy and identity, the Museum's expansion and construction of the Mariner's Hall will only increase its reach and purpose, revitalizing downtown while reaffirming its commitment to the community. Investment in this project is an investment in who we are and the stories we want to share with others. We encourage the Cultural Resources Economic Fund Review Panel to support the Columbia River Maritime Museum's Mariner's Hall.

Jessamyn Grace West
Executive Director, **Astoria Downtown Historic District Association**
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Astoria, OR 97103
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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



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 8, 2024

Dear Esteemed Members of the Cultural Resources Economic Fund Review Panel,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Columbia River Maritime Museum's (CRMM) Mariners Hall project, currently under review for Phase Two of the Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF). As the State Representative for District 32, I have had the pleasure of visiting the museum and discussing the transformative potential of Mariners Hall with Executive Director Bruce Jones.

The Mariners Hall project stands out for several compelling reasons:

1. **Educational Opportunities:** Mariners Hall will significantly expand educational programs for youth in Northwest Oregon. The interactive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) exhibits will spark curiosity and foster a deeper understanding of maritime history among our young learners.
2. **Preservation of Maritime Heritage:** This project is a monumental step forward in preserving and showcasing Oregon's rich maritime history. The modernization and expansion initiatives will create a more engaging and accessible visitor experience, highlighting the cultural and historical significance of the maritime culture of coastal Indigenous people.
3. **Economic Impact:** The development of a world-class cultural institution like Mariners Hall will have a tremendous economic benefit for Northwest Oregon. It will attract visitors from afar, boosting local businesses such as shops, restaurants, and lodging facilities. This influx of tourism will be a significant driver of economic growth in our community.
4. **Community and Visitor Engagement:** The Mariners Hall project will transform CRMM into an integrated campus environment with thoughtfully planned landscaping, wayfinding, and outdoor spaces. The new exhibition and education hall, along with updated and new exhibits, will nearly double CRMM's programming capacity, enhancing the overall visitor experience.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5. **Project Viability and Planning:** The project is on track to break ground in October 2024 and open in Fall 2026. CRMM has already raised over 80% of the \$30 million goal, demonstrating strong financial planning and community support. The museum's collaborative approach to planning and design ensures the best possible value and impact.

In summary, the Mariners Hall project is a visionary initiative that will enrich our educational landscape, preserve our cultural heritage, and drive economic growth in Northwest Oregon. I wholeheartedly support CRMM's application for State funding and encourage the CREF Review Panel to approve this exemplary project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Representative Cyrus Javadi
State of Oregon House of Representatives

MelissaFunk
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July 27, 2024

Dear Cultural Resources Economic Fund Review Panel,

As a lifelong resident of Astoria, and an educator with our public school system, it is with great weight I write this letter. The Columbia River Maritime Museum and the Education Program have been invaluable assets to my classroom and students. I know any educator in my district would wholeheartedly agree with such a statement.

I have been privileged to host Columbia River Maritime Museum Educators in my classroom for over a decade, and I have been impressed with the professionalism, enthusiasm, and diligence with which they work to meet the needs of teachers and students. They not only provide interesting and fun topics for students to study, but they manage to do so while supporting our Oregon state STEAM standards. My students are eager to learn from this team and they are bursting with excitement each time they have such an opportunity to do so, whether that be in our classrooms at school or on-site at the CRMM Campus. In a time in which school districts are struggling to maintain healthy budgets, and STEAM opportunities are taking a hit in the education sector, the ability of the CRMM Education Team to support our public schools is more imperative than ever.

The opportunity to better engage with our young community on topics that will undoubtedly spur student interest in STEAM is part of the reason the CRMM Campus needs Mariners Hall. With classroom or learning space being highly limited on the current campus, it would be a game changer for our students and educators when they visit the museum for educational programming. By supporting this building campaign, you are supporting the future of our community. The museum serves multiple counties full of students that otherwise lack exposure to and experience with such awesome STEAM programming and exhibits. The Columbia River Maritime Museum is working to fill a desperate need our community, they are helping public schools with the heavy lifting when it comes to STEAM education. My job is made easier thanks to the incredible support of the Columbia River Maritime Museum and Education Program. It would be foolhardy to not give them complete support in return as they seek to better serve our young people.

The youth and the public educators of our community need you to support this endeavor. It will change the dynamics of education programming that CRMM can provide to our community and will only bring about positive interactions with STEAM subjects that our students so desperately need and crave.

Sincerely,

Melissa Funk

Melissa Funk
Educator, Astoria School District
President, Astoria Education Association

Betsy Johnson

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July 23, 2024

Sue Hildick
Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon
P.O. Box 9160
Portland, Oregon 97207

Dear Ms. Hildick:

For 21 years, I represented Clatsop County in the Oregon Legislature. From 2000 to 2021 I had a "front row seat" to the dynamic renaissance of downtown Astoria. The recovery and restoration of the Liberty Theatre was the first step. As the theatre was "dressed up", people felt good about coming back downtown. Specialty stores, first-class boutique hotels, and high-end restaurants followed. People invested in their place and cheered for it to blossom. Success gave way to more success. Word spread throughout Oregon that Astoria was "cool" and had lots of amenities to share.

Notable among those venues and organizations that "rolled out the red carper" for visitors - not just Oregonians but global guests-was the Columbia River Maritime Museum. They remain the #1 tourist attraction in Astoria, surpassing even the Goonies House and the fabled Astoria Column.

The Maritime Museum has been at the center of "cultural gravitational pull" in the region. The newly opened display "Cedar and Sea Gallery" will compliment the late fall opening of another Native American exhibit focused on the foundational role that indigenous people played in our region. Memorialized in the Lewis and Clark diaries that were produced during the 1805 Corps of Discovery indigenous contributions to the maritime culture of NW Oregon are proudly displayed and interpreted - always with participation of the Tribes.

Columbia River Maritime Museum's programming is designed to be experiential and interpretive. Visitors are immersed in the powerful ocean forces that characterize the Columbia River Bar. Visitors can walk beside the Coast Guard vessels and helicopters that protect commercial and recreational mariners. Virtually all the exhibits possess some element of "interactivity" in addition to weaving the tapestry of historic manuscripts, maps and artifacts into the "visitor experience". A 3D theatre puts guests in the "middle of the action" across an ever changing tableau of offerings.

The new Mariners Hall project was recommended by the Cultural Resource Economic Fund (CREF) Review Panel to move into "Phase II" review. Part of their process includes the solicitation of letters supporting Mariners Hall for funding.

As a long-time board member, personal contributor and legislative advocate for the "economic drivers" of Clatsop County, I was delighted to be asked. Please consider this correspondence as my unqualified support for the Columbia River Maritime Museum project.

A few quick "factoids" may aid in your deliberations.

- The museum has no debt and robust reserves

- The board is active, engaged, generous, probative and, occasionally, constructively critical of staff recommendations and activity.
- The board has paid earnest attention to financial stability, administrative and staff continuity as well as board solicitation and development.
- Children are a huge part of museum programming. Designed to augment educational experiences for rural students, immersive educational opportunities are designed to capture the imagination of all academic levels. The environment is a perfect introduction to a vast array of career and professional opportunities.
- There is ample parking, attractive and well-kept grounds, stylish advertising in appropriate publications, membership communications and active "word of mouth" visitor solicitations.
- The Columbia River Maritime Museum has The Best retail space that contributes to the "bottom line" with earned revenue generated from an eclectic mix of high quality and attractively priced complimentary merchandise.
- Continuous investment in the physical plant improves the quality of experience, not just for visitors, but also for the professional staff seeking career advancement in the museum and cultural sector.

I will close by calling attention to one of my favorite programs at the Columbia River Maritime Museum with a global educational emphasis. Small boats, equipped with GPS monitoring, are released in cooperation with military and community maritime operations. These small boats, designed by kids in rural and less prosperous communities, are tracked as they make their way across the Pacific Ocean. Who knows how many metrologists, marine pilots, coast guard officers and seamen, oceanographers, marine scientists-the list goes on and on - are motivated by these tiny maritime travelers? I've been to schools and personally viewed the unalloyed joy and wonderment in the eyes of the youthful participants.

No monetary price can be attributed to the possibilities born out of the rich curriculum offered by CRMM. However, you can start with a financial investment in the Mariners Hall through CREF funding to keep the maritime light alive. This is a hell of an opportunity. I hope the CREF and the Legislature seize it.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to call me at (503) 543-4200.

Sincerely,



Betsy Johnson
(Former State Senator)