



June 1, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Senate Budget Committee Chair
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Assembly Budget Committee Chair
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: FY 22-23 Budget Request: California Culture and History Investments

Dear Budget Leaders,

We, the undersigned write to respectfully request that as you negotiate the natural resources package in the FY 22-23 budget, that you include a one-time allocation of **\$125 million in funding for the California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) at the Natural Resources Agency and create two permanent positions to lead CCHE's programs.**

Specifically, this funding would include a one-time allocation of \$50 million to the Museum Grant Program (MGP), a one-time allocation of \$75 million to support CCHE grants, and two permanent full-time leadership positions for the California Natural Resources Agency to install leadership for the CCHE and MGP. The two permanent positions we are requesting are consistent with a proposal in the Governor's Budget ([BCP 0540-024-BCP-2022-A1](#)), though we would like to see these two positions be developed as leadership roles for CCHE, rather than added to the Bonds and Grants Unit generally.

This appropriation would demonstrate California's commitment to supporting the vital work of museums in ways that reflect and promote the state's priorities through competitive grants administered by CCHE. These grants, in turn, would bolster California museums' efforts to serve underserved communities, fight misinformation and promote understanding of critical issues, share untold stories to prompt important public dialogue, improve access to and safety and resilience of important cultural and historic assets, partner with schools and teachers to broaden exposure to the state's ethnic history and deepen science understanding, and provide for the ethical stewardship of culturally sensitive art and artifacts.

For example, this funding request would help museums partner with the state to address key issues in California, including:

- **Boosting efforts to educate the public about the impacts of climate change and how Californians can respond.** For example, the [San Diego Natural History Museum opened California Blooming, an exhibition that explores wildflowers and climate change](#). The photographic show presents California's extraordinary wildflowers as both a cause for celebration and protection by connecting the biodiversity of our state with the actions that must be taken to protect it. The museum partnered with the Climate Science Alliance to offer a series of daytime lessons for youth and evening talks for adults about the impacts of climate change in Southern California. A second example is [the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, which engages with the local community in a citizen science effort](#) to document and analyze the impacts of the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire on biodiversity in the burn zone.
- **Educating the public about how human activity affects our planet's complex ecosystem and how Californians can respond.** For example, the Monterey Bay Aquarium recently opened its [Into the Deep exhibition](#) to educate all aquarium goers about mysterious deep sea life and to help make the case for policies that protect this special habitat from extractive and damaging mining efforts.
- **Raising awareness about racial inequities, past and present, and steps individuals and communities can take to address them.** For example, the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles partnered with other Los Angeles organizations to [commemorate the 1871 Chinese massacre in Los Angeles](#), one of the bloodiest attacks against Asians in U.S. history. The event "sent a resounding message at this critical moment in time that we will not tolerate bigotry, injustice and racist scapegoating of Asians or any group in our society" one speaker said.
- **Engaging new groups or communities in the creation and presentation of content.** For example, the Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland is co-developing a planetarium show and programs with Native communities that highlight local Native people's narratives about the night sky. A second example is the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, which, in response to the pandemic closures, adapted its [Queer Santa Cruz exhibition](#) to become a dual online and in-person exhibition that has increased accessibility and has educated learners near and far about the region's LGBTQ+ trailblazers.
- **Enhancing educational services and experiences for students and teachers in low-income areas.** For example, the Museum of Sonoma County is providing a

visual arts [program for 5th through 6th grade students at Title I schools in the City of Santa Rosa](#); lessons are grounded in the California Standards for Visual Arts and based on the Museum's changing exhibitions and permanent collection.

- **Preventing the loss of cultural, historical, and irreplaceable artifacts and buildings, increasingly at risk to the impacts of climate change.** A few weeks after celebrating upgrades to their facility, completed during their COVID-19 pandemic closure, the Greenville [Cy Hall Memorial Museum was destroyed by the Dixie Fire](#). This was sadly reminiscent of the [Gold Nugget Museum that was consumed by the Camp Fire](#) that decimated Paradise in 2018.
- **Promoting the ethical stewardship of California Indian tribal artifacts.** For instance, the San Bernardino County Museum recently [announced the repatriation of culturally significant artifacts](#) made by matriarchs of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

This allocation would update MGP funding priorities to focus on projects and programs that:

- Prioritize funding for museum programs and projects that serve Title 1 schools and children in low income communities.
- Enhance access, safety, and resiliency of cultural assets, including accommodations at historic buildings, cultural sites, and museums, and protecting at-risk cultural, natural, and historic assets from the effects of climate change and disasters.
- Educate the public about critical issues facing Californians such as climate change, homelessness, and LGBTQIA issues.
- Support ethical stewardship of culturally sensitive artifacts, including consultations with California Indian tribes and the repatriation of sensitive artifacts.

California's 1,500+ museums help us understand the past, present, and potential futures. In California, museums serve as caretakers, interpreters, educators, and amplifiers of culture and history, scientific discoveries, and the arts. Further, these museums serve over 22 million visitors per year, support over 80,000 jobs and have a \$6.5 billion financial impact on the economy. Throughout California, the state partners with these museums – including art museums, zoos, aquaria, historical societies, science centers, botanical gardens, children's museums, and cultural centers – and should ensure that these facilities remain accessible, meaningful, and respectful to all.

Finally, museums offer all Californians the opportunity to learn and grow an appreciation for arts, nature, and the wonderful lessons these landmarks provide. Together with California Indigenous communities, collections, staff and artists, California's museums help educate communities through exhibitions, public programs, and research and are community-centric locations. With the support of this budget allocation, we move from being civic icons to places with true, lasting civic impact; therefore, it is imperative that the State of California's strategic, one-time investment recognizes the significant role museums play in educating the public, helps build the capacity of institutions that document and preserve California's history, and protects cultural resources held for public benefit.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact staff by emailing quincy.stivers@sen.ca.gov if you have further questions.

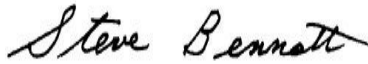
Sincerely,



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State Senator
17th Senate District



Mike Fong
State Assemblymember
49th Assembly District



Steve Bennett
State Assemblymember
37th Assembly District



Cottie Petrie-Norris
State Assemblymember
74th Assembly District



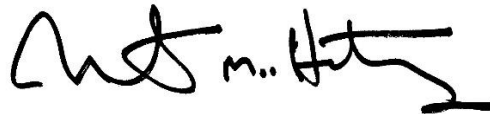
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