

Cottage Theatre

February 7, 2022

Rep. John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
State of Oregon
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Rep. Lively and colleagues:

I am writing to urge your support for HB 4040, which will provide \$50MM in badly-needed relief funding for Oregon's beleaguered arts and entertainment industry. Performing arts organizations were the first to shut down in March 2020, and will be the among the last to recover given that we deal exclusively with "large group gatherings" that pose considerable COVID-spreading risk.

Our 40-year-old community theatre ceased public performances in March 2020 and we have yet to reopen. We were in the midst of a multi-year remodeling project when the pandemic hit and that construction project needed to move forward lest we lose several hundred thousand dollars in committed funds that needed to be expended by 6/30/2021. Like everyone involved with construction, we have been heavily impacted by COVID-related supply chain issues. Our construction was supposed to be finished in September 2021, but we are still waiting on delayed materials. When we are able to reopen, our newly-expanded facility will help stimulate Cottage Grove's economic recovery as 70% of our patrons travel from outside our town to attend our shows.

But for that economic recovery to happen, we need to get through the rough patch of omicron so that audiences feel safe returning to our midst. HB 4040 will help our organization - and countless other arts and culture venues around our state - survive this most challenging time.

Oregon's rich arts and cultural assets are such an important part of what makes our state great. Please help preserve these assets for future generations.

Thank you for your service to all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Susan Goes

Susan Goes
Executive Director