

February 7, 2022

Representative John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity

RE: HB 4040

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the Committee,

**“Ghost Light” in Silverman Theatre at the Newport Performing Arts Center (PAC)
pierced the darkness for over 510 days during 2020/2021**

Now, 23 months and 690 days later, in Feb. 2022, the PAC is still a shadow of its former self.

I, as Executive Director (before retirement) of the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts (OCCA), closed the Newport Performing Arts Center on March 19th, 2020. Its 10 resident companies stopped in their tracks. No one imagined it would remain dark until mid-summer 2021. Recently, three resident companies have scheduled performances. But few events are happening 23 months later! Waves of viruses keep casts and audiences wary.

The “Ghost Light” still shines at the PAC.

The financial impact of this continuing closure to OCCA, which manages the PAC, is staggering at over \$1M in lost revenue for staff and programming. Talented individuals were laid off and few returned. The cultural impact is also staggering to our community/county, to our youth, to our economic vitality.

What the PAC faces, many coastal performing arts venues face as well. I am aware of the challenges arts organizations have in rural coastal areas. (OCCA is the regional arts council for the 363 miles of the Oregon coast.)

Even in the best of times, the coast is (1) cut off geographically from the rest of the state; (2) supports smaller population densities; and (3) experiences fewer donors and supporters. The pandemic has financially crippled far too many of our coastal arts organizations. TBDs have been the norm.

“Ghost Lights” still shine on the Coast.

I respectfully ask for your vote to pass HB 4040 which will provide \$50 million dollars in relief to Oregon’s Arts and Culture sector. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Catherine Rickbone
CACO Board Member
OCCA Executive Director, Retired