



8 FEBRUARY 2022

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

Dear Chair Lively and Committee Members,

We are writing to express **strong support of the passage of HB 4040, which invests \$50 million in the continued recovery of Oregon's cultural sector.** Founded in 1987, the Bosco-Milligan Foundation/Architectural Heritage Center produces and presents educational programs and initiatives about Portland's unique built environment and cultural heritage. Our work helps us better understand and promote diversity in the built environment and engage more people in supporting Portland's architecture and culture--past, present, and future.

For example, for over 25 years we have led major intercultural historical recovery projects focused on the buildings of Portland's black community, completed in partnership with members of this community. This includes a seminal program in the 1990s, *Cornerstones of Community*, that was among the first of its kind in identifying places of architectural and cultural significance in the black community to encourage their preservation. Our related research project completed in 2020, *African American Resources in Portland Oregon, from 1851 to 1973*, continued to shift the paradigm for how we acknowledge diversity in our built environment by emphasizing the cultural import of built spaces as much as, or even more so, architectural or design integrity.

Over the past two years, like many cultural organizations, the pandemic has necessitated that we reinvent our programs, sustain repeated closures of our public center, cancel events, while at the same time face increase supply and service costs. We have experienced earned revenue loss because we've had to postpone programs, offer them at no cost to retain audiences, or cancel them altogether. Even more significantly, we've seen a significant decrease in charitable contributions, which includes donations, memberships, and corporate sponsorships upon which we rely.

We have persevered in the delivery of our programs during these challenging times. Funding that the state and federal government has allocated to cultural organizations like ours in the past has been a lifeline that has sustained our critical cultural infrastructure to date. Nonprofits are still experiencing prolonged effects of the pandemic and the sector remains fragile. The Cultural Advocacy Coalition reports that over 70% of nonprofits have experienced a severe financial impact that has brought closures, layoffs, furloughs, and other cost-savings measures across the state.

We therefore enthusiastically support HB 4040. We suggest two modifications to the draft bill that we believe will have the positive effects of enabling a more inclusive group of organizations to be eligible for this important financial relief and supporting organizations where they really need help.

- The current language in the draft bill restricts eligible organizations to “venues, performing arts and museums.” There are many cultural organizations in Oregon that do not fit into these categories but who contribute substantially to the vibrancy of Oregon’s cultural life. We encourage broadening this language to encompass the diverse organizations who together serve the cultural sector.
- Secondly, the determination of relief funding based on loss of “earned revenue” disadvantages nonprofit cultural organizations who have experienced a substantial loss of charitable contributions triggered by the pandemic. These are vital sources of funding for a fiscally sound nonprofit and their loss can be devastating to an organization.

Oregon’s cultural organizations need financial help as they navigate the short and long-term impact of the pandemic, recover, and rebuild. The passing of HB4040 will be key to revitalizing Oregon’s cultural sector.

Sincerely,



Denyse C. McGriff
President



Stephanie Whitlock
Executive Director