

House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Testimony Submitted on behalf of HB 2459

Dear Chair Bynum and Committee Members,

As a lifelong Oregon resident and small business owner, I strongly support the passage of HB 2459, which would provide critical funding for the continued recovery and reinvention of the arts and culture sector. Frankly, the existence of entities such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Britt Music Festival was one of the primary reasons that I returned to Oregon and the Rogue Valley after completing my education. I know that is also true for many of my friends and colleagues.

As a former board president of both of the aforementioned organizations, and as a trustee of a longtime local foundation that funds many arts organizations in Jackson and Josephine counties, I am also aware that the vitality and even the continued existence of these organizations, as well as many smaller ones, remains very much at risk. The pandemic may (or may not) be over, but its effects are not. Coupled with several years of wildfire smoke diminishing their audiences, many arts and cultural organizations in Southern Oregon are struggling to hold on. HB 2459 would do much to help them hold on and reemerge as even stronger community assets.

Very truly yours ,

Dan Thorndike

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