

January 27, 2023

Dear Committee Members,

Our state is in a moment of regeneration. No matter the industry, people are still dealing with the reverberations of the turmoil of the past three years. As we slowly emerge from this period, it has become crystal clear we are collectively creating a new world, and that is both exciting and terrifying. As we bring this new world into being, I believe that arts and culture are some of our most powerful tools.

When creative activity is happening in large and small ways throughout an area, it creates a surprising ripple effects of benefits, even for those who don't participate directly. Having a variety of theaters, galleries, and concerts means more energy and life in our downtown, more tourists, more renovated buildings, and more people and businesses moving here. Investing in music venues, storytellers, and community art centers means more people coming together to share experiences and ideas, connecting with each other, and understanding each other in new ways. An investment like House Bill 2459 doesn't just uplift one sector but impacts the entire state. A dynamic and healthy arts sector fuels the economy, creates social cohesion and connectivity, and cultivates empathy. For us to collectively make the best Oregon possible, arts must be a part of the story.

We live in a really complex time with complex problems, which will require creative solutions. Investing in Oregon's arts and culture sector will help build the community creativity we need to thrive. Oregon has historically supported the arts and enjoyed the benefits of these ripple effects. We should be proud of what we've built and take responsibility for keeping our investment going. To me, this investment is not about rebuilding the world we had in 2019; it is investing in us creating a new world.

I appreciate your consideration of House Bill 2459, which will seed resilience and regeneration for Oregon.

In partnership,

Kelly Johnson, Executive Director

P.S. As a small arts & culture organization, we greatly benefited from the relief funding from the state. It is sometimes hard to find opportunities for small organizations, and those funds helped us remain strong as we find the best way to support the community.

