

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

The Laurelthirst Public House is the oldest independently run music venue in the State of Oregon. We offer mostly free music 7 days a week, and have been a cornerstone of the Portland music scene since 1988. We have been supporting local music and musicians since then. 80% of the hours we are open we have live music on our stage, or are preparing to.

In 2020, we closed our doors, as did most businesses, in March 2020. We reopened in July 2021. At that time, we hosted a fraction of the shows prior to our closure.

We were forced to close for 3 weeks in January 2021 due to staff and musician illness. So many acts were cancelling and too many workers were sick to reasonably keep open our business. This was well beyond the initial State mandated closures.

To date we still have a smattering of cancellations due to illnesses at the present time. For some reason the acts now feel like it's ok to cancel the day or two before a show, which is understandable if it's due to illness. We never saw so many last minute cancellations (mostly for legitimate reasons) prior to covid.

What we are definitely still experiencing is that some acts are STILL uncomfortable to play in an indoor venue. Perhaps they have health risks, or perhaps they are still concerned about contracting covid.

Michael Hurley, a long time regular performer here and all over the world since the 1960's just booked his first Happy Hour show for next month with us. He used to hold a regular once a month slot, but since covid had stopped. Previous regular acts are still trickling back to the stage after almost 3 years.

Food costs have increased due to inflation and supply issues. Payroll has increased due to state wide minimum wage increases (2019 \$12.50/hr.---> 2022 \$14.75/hr.) without the sales between March 2020 - July 2021 to support that.

Utilities have increased. Insurance has GREATLY increased.

Music licensing companies have been forced to raise their fees to survive the pandemic. We pay out almost 10K a year just to those companies.

Another example is our HVAC service company. They charged \$175 for a biannual cleaning/checkup on our two units until the Fall of 2021. They just increased thier cost for that to \$560. That's a 320% increase.

In 2019 we paid out 104.7K to our acts. Pay is based on a percentage of our sales that we take in at the register. The busier the show, the better the acts get paid. Some night shows have a cover charge that 100% goes to the musicians. For these we do not pay

out the acts from the house, unless there is a prior arrangement made. Additionally, unless there's a cover (only 3-4 shows a week have one), there is a tip jar passed around so the musicians can be compensated and appreciated beyond what we can pay them.

Prior to covid we had 16 shows a week. Currently we are at an average of 11 per week, still well below pre-covid numbers.

In 2022 we payed out 84.6K to our acts, 20K below our 2019 numbers. This doesn't account for door or tip moneys lost this last year by our musicians.

Our community of musicians (almost all of our shows are populated with local acts) were enormously impacted by the pandemic, and continue to struggle to make even close to the same income from gigging than before.

We employed 14 people (including owners) in 2019. We are now at 11. This month we had to lay off a staff member and have the owners pick up their shifts because we are having problems being financially solvent. The four owners just took a 50% reduction in salary to try and keep the doors open as well.

Obviously we all have been greatly impacted due to the pandemic. We have been very grateful for any help we have received so far, and any additional help would be greatly appreciated since our industry is still experiencing hardships from the pandemic. Thanks for your time.

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