

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature and the House Committee on Economic Development And Small Business,

McMenamins presents literally thousands of events every year throughout the State. We renovate historic properties and create jobs and draw people into the wonderful communities we inhabit. We generate a lot of tax revenue for the cities and towns that we operate in. The pandemic just about crippled us and we are a long way from recovering. We currently have over 500 job openings on our corporate job board. In addition to that we have many key positions we aren't currently able to consider filling or posting for.

Due to the nature of the grant most of our properties are ineligible for this specific support however the Crystal Ballroom and the White Eagle in Portland are. Any aid to those venues allow us to direct our own funding to continue to improve our properties throughout the state. Without support we have to determine and prioritize what we can and can't support. I just came back from a City Council meeting in Troutdale where they thanked us for our contribution-financially and culturally- to the community. We launched an new venue in Forest Grove last year and ran that at a financial loss. The community was delighted to have us and we plan to bring more events there this summer. That will require more investment from our side.

We have worked hard to recover from the pandemic but we are on a long road to recovery. We haven't been able to reach pre pandemic sales levels , the cost of everything is way up making that gap even larger and additionally we struggle with staffing and have been unable to capture similar sales to pre pandemic at the events. In 2022 the White Eagle fell over \$500,000 short of 2019 sales, an exorbitant amount for such a small venue. The Crystal has also not been able to get back to 2019 sales. This means we had a year of pretty much NO sales at all and then 2021 and 2022 fell far behind. We are having to combat and make up for 3 years of expense without the sales to support it.

The music industry is still struggling to get back to where it was pre-pandemic. So many tours have cancelled and have not rescheduled due to uncertainty still. Artists are still getting sick on the road and cancelling shows that were rescheduled.

We have fewer confirmed dates on the calendar and the shows we do have are asking for a lot more money than we can offer as inflation has affected the cost of travel, gear, etc. It has been a struggle to fill the calendars and negatively impacting our staff who rely on busy schedules to get by.

Labor is more expensive. The general wage for sound engineers has increased across the board between employees and freelance engineers. This is making it difficult to find staffing. If I can find someone willing to work within the range, they aren't as experienced. That means more training hours which winds up being more expensive.

Gear is more expensive as well and harder to find. Most items are on back order making it more difficult to get anything in stock. If you do find something, then it's at a very increased price.

We need support to continue to bridge this transition.

Our grant will be used to pay our rent and utilities (we still don't have enough concerts to cover our overhead) and to subsidize artist offers in order to bring more cultural events to our city. We will hire more staff and be able to upgrade our equipment (we plan to enter into a lease agreement with an Oregon company for our AV at the White Eagle).

We have a big hole we are collectively trying to dig our way out of and without much needed support we won't be able to continue bringing music, culture, and revenue to the many Oregon communities that we support.

Thank you for your consideration

I am available for testimony or to answer any questions.

Jimi Biron
Director of Entertainment Operations
And Venue Development
McMenamins Inc.