

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to support the passage of House Bill 2459.

Established in 1999, Pickathon has become widely recognized as one of America's premiere experiential music festivals held annually in Happy Valley, Oregon.

In 2019 Pickathon generated millions in direct and indirect economic impact that included; fully booked hotels near the Clackamas Mall; 5000+ visiting out of state tourists; a large spike in sales at local stores the week of the festival; dozens of small businesses and working artists experiencing measurable growth due to exposure and connections made at Pickathon; and increased local home sales in Happy Valley because people loved the area.

Unfortunately, in 2020 COVID regulations required Pickathon to close for over 2 years.

In 2022 Pickathon overcame herculean challenges to successfully reopen.

Our festival grounds were in major disrepair after not getting regular maintenance.

Additionally, many long term vendors either shut down and/or increased prices and an unusually large percentage of staff needed to be replaced.

All of these factors lead to maintenance, vendor, and staff costs increasing between ~20-40% and an overall loss of ~\$400k for the year.

The 2022 ARP grant was an essential part of how Pickathon survived the COVID headwinds to focus on getting back to building a long term sustainable future.

Unfortunately, the lingering impacts of COVID are not yet dissipated and we continue to forecast that 2023 will be challenging with anticipated maintenance, vendor, and staff costs increasing again between ~15-30% which is well above normal inflation of ~2-5%.

We know that we are not alone in facing these challenges in 2023 as the music venue, promoter, and festival business was easily one of the most impacted by COVID in the state, and the last to fully recover.

Passing HB2459 is a crucially important investment in the state of Oregon as the rich cultural fabric and the associated economic benefits took generations to build and it seems very short sighted to allow the economic shock of COVID to risk wide scale closures as it won't come back quickly.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to all of our voices.

Sincerely,

Pickathon Music Festival