



February 5, 2024

Oregon Legislature
House Committee on Economic Development & Small Business
Salem, Oregon

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Small Business-

As an arts loving citizen of Oregon, resident of Jackson County, board member of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon and the Principal Advisor at Amplify Leadership Advisors, **I respectfully ask for your vote to pass HB 4124** which will provide funding for 14 critically needed Capital projects and resilience funding for a diverse group of Arts and Culture Organizations around the state.

The Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon has managed the CREF process since 2013, and we spend months every cycle working to bring to the Legislature a set of “shovel ready” projects that have demonstrated local support, impact their communities and the Arts Ecology of Oregon. Last session, while we appreciate that two Portland Metro projects were selected for funding, the remaining 14 projects were not funded in what seems to be an error in the process. We hope that these worthy projects that represent a variety of regions, art disciplines receive your support.

A part of HB 4124 includes Resiliency Funding for the Arts and Culture Sector. In Oregon, the Arts and Culture sector was among the first to close and the last to reopen following the pandemic, which has led to an outsized negative economic impact on arts and culture organizations. Further, the sector has an outsized impact on the economic vitality of the communities in which we live and work. It is not atypical that \$1 spent on arts and culture leads to \$3 or \$4 spent in the local economy. Supporting the resilience of this sector is an investment in the local economic vitality of our communities, across the State.

HB4124 recognizes that Oregon’s “anchor” arts institutions bear a disproportionate amount of economic downturn because of their size and scale. The bill provides \$5.6M for the anchor arts groups, approximately the same amount that was previously dedicated to live venues. We also propose a statewide grant fund of \$14M for the remainder of the sector that did not receive funding from the 2023 legislature.

The Arts and Culture sector are the emergency response centers for the souls of our community. HB 4124 represents an important investment in the infrastructure of our communities, in the economic vitality of our state and in the mental health of Oregon’s citizens. **I urge your strong support for the creative sector through passage of HB 4124!**

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Schmitz', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David Schmitz

Principal Advisor, Owner, Amplify Leadership Advisors
Board Member, Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon