

PORTLAND OPERA

February 6, 2024

Dear Chair Bynum and Committee Members on Economic Development & Small Business,

On behalf of the staff, board, and artists of Portland Opera, I am writing to you today with a sense of urgency to support **HB 4124**.

Our cultural arts sector is in crisis. Portland Opera has been a cornerstone of our community for 60 years, enriching the lives of countless individuals, but we, alongside our fellow arts organizations, are struggling to find a path forward. The arts and culture sector is a source of pride, joy, and cultural enrichment for our city and state, offering a unique platform for artistic expression that transcends boundaries and connects people from many backgrounds.

Last session, an oversight left 14 capital projects, which were specifically identified by the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon for their local support and positive impact, unfunded. These projects will enrich local communities and help sustain the arts ecosystem across the state, and we urge you to support them.

Portland Opera was the grateful recipient of federal funding during the Covid crisis, but the slow return of audiences poses a threat to our survival, and of other arts and culture organizations like us. The resiliency funding contained in HB 4124 is a relatively small investment that will have an immediate, and tangible impact, keeping organizations, from closing their doors and allowing them to continue to shape the cultural landscape across the state. The arts are a vital economic driver that generate employment, support local businesses and industries, and connect communities.

We understand that the Legislature faces many challenges in this session, and we thank you for your consideration and commitment to our state.

Sincerely yours,



Sue Dixon
General Director, Portland Opera

