

8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

To the Oregon House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business:

The Astoria Arts and Movement Center (AAMC) ardently supports HB 4124 in its entirety.

Formed in 2010, the AAMC's mission is to offer dance, performing arts, culture and movement classes that enhance, inspire & embrace the community. On an individual level these activities have statistically been shown to dramatically improve self-esteem, motivation, physical health, emotional well-being, social skills, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to learn. Communally these things benefit local economies, encourage diversity, and strengthen local infrastructures and other organizations. We KNOW there is a need for individuals to express creativity in a healthy way and we take this to heart. The AAMC seeks to meet this essential need, as it is our main objective that *everyone* has access to these vital things that strengthen us on both an individual and communal level.

In addition to providing dance, performing arts, culture and movement classes, the AAMC has worked with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Clatsop Community College's Historic Preservation Program, Benjamin Moore, and Oregon's State Historic Preservation Office to invest nearly \$200,000 in grant funding to historically restore the 1923 Odd Fellows building and its second story ballroom that serves as the AAMC studio. This effort has transformed the building itself into a downtown cultural hub which now houses the nonprofit Ten Fifteen Theater, Sea Gypsy Gallery, Green Door Café, and Nathan Crowchild's Raintown Vintage office on the first floor. This investment into Astoria's arts, culture and heritage has been incredibly important to our rural community as without it, these creative and cultural opportunities and businesses would not exist.

Investment in the arts, culture and heritage is also incredibly important to our economy. According to the recent State Arts Agency Legislative Appropriations Preview, **Oregon ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in the country for state support of the Arts**. In stark contrast, the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study from [Americans for the Arts](#) released last October, reveals that Oregon's arts and culture sector generated \$829 million in spending by organizations and event attendees in FY2022. The results include data from 19 Oregon regions and communities, whose participation was supported by Travel Oregon. Oregon's data shows that 8.9 million attendees of arts and culture events across Oregon spent an average of \$39 per event for a total expenditure of \$330,920,191, excluding the cost of the admission ticket. Event spending includes meals, transportation/parking, souvenirs/retail, and hotel stays. Close to one million of the attendees were visitors. **Astoria's average spending per attendee is twice that of both the national and state of Oregon spending averages**. Nationally, America's nonprofit arts and culture sector is a \$151.7 billion industry – one that supports 2.6 million jobs and generates \$29.1 billion in government revenue.

Investment in the arts, culture and humanities honors our past, celebrates who we are today and fosters hope for future generations. We thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 4124 so that our communities can thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessamyn West', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jessamyn Grace West  
Executive Director, **Astoria Arts and Movement Center**  
342 10<sup>th</sup> st  
Astoria, OR 97103  
503.791.5657  
[jessamyn@astoriaartsandmovement.com](mailto:jessamyn@astoriaartsandmovement.com)