

**PORTLAND
CENTER STAGE
AT THE ARMORY**

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February 6, 2024

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

Dear Chair Bynum and Committee Members,

My name is Liam Kaas-Lentz, and I'm proud to be the Managing Director at Portland Center Stage in Portland, the largest regional theater in the metro area. As a leader of an organization whose work is pivotal to the performing arts ecosystem in Oregon, I'm writing to urge your support of House Bill 4124.

Portland Center Stage is the leader of a thriving theatre scene in Portland. We serve 100,000 patrons annually, many of them students experiencing theater for the first time. Our slate of performances and community programs allows us to employ actors, designers, artisans, directors, choreographers, musicians, and engineers in year-round capacities which allow them to earn a living wage and call Portland home. This robust community of artists makes Portland a city to be celebrated on the national and global scale.

Outwardly, our economic impact to the city (and the Pearl district, where we call home) is estimated to be \$13m annually. Our neighborhood is rich with restaurants, bars, storefronts, and shops all of whom rely on our audiences coming downtown to support their operations. Deschutes Brewing and Powell's Books have both shared that they increase staffing on afternoons or evenings when they know we have performances.

The funding in House Bill 4125 provides a crucial lifeline to the arts and culture sector of Oregon. It serves as unmitigated proof of Oregon's support of theaters, museums, symphonies, operas, and ballets. The \$26m allocated within the Bill will be immediately impactful to each and every organization with every dollar of that funding going to crucial operations that support the Oregon economy and the livelihood of its citizens.

I urge your support of this bill, in its entirety.

Sincerely,



Liam Kaas-Lentz
Managing Director
Portland Center Stage