

To whomever reads this,

My name is Erik Fox. Currently, I am employed by Salem Cinema but prior to my employment I was a frequent customer there for years. Salem Cinema provides something that no other movie theater provides: A proper place to see arthouse & independent films. As someone who is passionate about cinema, and having only watched films on a laptop during the lockdown, I know that the experience of watching movies is best served by a theater. Films are a vital part of our culture, and the social/communal experience that movie theaters provide is essential to the art form. In a state that has a growing film industry & a history of groundbreaking independent films, like many films by auteurs such as Kelly Reichardt, Gus Van Sant, Todd Haynes & more, we need places in our state that value, uphold & present these films the way they deserve. Salem Cinema is one of the only theaters outside the Portland metropolitan area that does this. Frankly, Salem Cinema is one of the few places Salem has that offers some defense against the popular sentiment of Salem being a boring place. Salem Cinema provides the community with culture and enriches us all for it.

Cinemas & theaters are a vital cultural institution that we have to protect and ensure the survival of, especially if we wish to encourage Oregon's growing film industry and cultural power!!! Before the pandemic started and since, I have seen crowds flock to see movies that they could stream for free online with Netflix or Hulu. Movies need dedicated physical spaces to be fully enjoyed and appreciated, living rooms & laptops do not suffice, and audiences know this. Theaters are not on their way out, they are beloved & valued by their communities, and if they are financially supported through this crisis they will come out the other side stronger & more appreciated than ever. We need to support them. We need to support Salem Cinema. Thank you sincerely for your time spent reading this, I hope you make the right choice.