



**Tom Rinehart**  
Chief Administrative  
Officer

**Ted Wheeler**  
Mayor

**CITY OF PORTLAND**  
**Office of Management  
and Finance**  
1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204

P: (503) 823-1182  
F: (503) 823-5384  
TTY: (503) 823-6868  
portlandoregon.gov/omf

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February 7, 2022

Representative John Lively, Chair  
House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity  
900 Court Street, NE, HR D  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the Committee:

The City of Portland supports of HB 4040, which would invest \$50 million dollars in the stability and recovery of Oregon's vital arts and culture sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our local arts community more than almost any other sector. According to the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, 94 percent of arts organizations and music venues across the state of Oregon have had to cancel events over the past two years, 70 percent have reported the crisis is having a severe financial impact, and 83 percent have had to mitigate these losses with layoffs, furloughs, and other cost-saving measures.

Emergency relief funds from the state and federal government have helped this vital sector survive this far, and we thank the Oregon Legislature for its past support. Even so, the recent Omicron wave has unfortunately forced another round of cancellations and closures, and the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Business Pulse Survey reports that the country's arts-related businesses and entertainment venues, which are significant economic drivers in our community, will take significantly more time to recover than other businesses.

HB 4040 represents a lifeline for our local artists, arts organizations and venues that remain in distress, including hundreds of smaller organizations that were unable to access other federal relief programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program and the Shuttered Venue Operators Grants, and many vital nonprofits that are led by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander and People of Color.

We urge you to support this important bill and help ensure that artists and arts organizations can play an important role in our economic and emotional recovery.

Sincerely yours,

Jeff Hawthorne  
City of Portland Arts Program Manager

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