

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 4040

February 8, 2022

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Cate, Vice-Chair Kropf, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Meara McLaughlin and I am Executive Director of MusicOregon, the nonprofit advocacy organization (formerly known as MusicPortland Bridge) that seeks to galvanize and support the commercial music sectors in Oregon, particularly those outside the largest metropolitan center. Our affiliate organization, MusicPortland supports the economic interests of the concentration of music businesses in that area. **I am writing in support of HB 4040 to sustain our performance venues and culturally supportive businesses that continue to suffer the ongoing impact of COVID.**

The case has been well made that performance venues are the keepers of culture that must be sustained to maintain our communities, creative identity, and rightful place within a National performance ecology. Because of the continuing Omicron surge, nearly half of the limited shows that were scheduled in January were forced to cancel be postponed because of infected performers or continued with significantly reduced audiences. **These venues still face an uncertain future.** With the retreat of Covid, they are hopeful that the performers and audiences will return, but the lag between advanced scheduling and booking of shows and when they occur, mean it will still be a slow build back to pre-COVID levels.

We are very gratified to see that this bill provides 40% of the funding to help the enterprises that support these cultural performances and creative economy. These businesses incurred the devastation of the shuttered venues but have not received the assistance that the venues have secured.

The inclusion of culturally supportive businesses in 4040 aligns well with HB 4048 that is currently also before this committee. Acknowledgment that culturally supportive enterprises have been as impacted as venues is a further acknowledgment that the performance (and music specifically) sector is not monolithic, but is made up of a broad collection of independent entrepreneurs who make culture a reality in our state. Where 4048 seeks to identify and quantify the breadth and scope of that professional community, 4040 is an excellent first step to support with these independent

businesses. Like the venues, it will be many months before these supporting enterprises that support performance and culture will be back to pre-pandemic levels.

Some examples of these performance culture support businesses specific to live performance include Independent promoters, lighting designers and live sound engineers, stage crews, rigging, electricians, and backline rental / repair companies. Creative services like publicists, graphic designers, photographers, videographers, all have been crushed by the closure of their industry.

If passed, MusicOregon will work hard to promote this opportunity across the state to make sure that the broadest select of cultural support businesses are aware of the assistance and their eligibility.

Thank you for your considerations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meara McLaughlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Meara McLaughlin