



Hon. John Lively, Chair
Hons. Jami Cate and Jason Kropf, Co-Chairs
House Economic Recovery and Prosperity Committee
Oregon Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

February 8, 2022

RE: SUPPORT – HB4040

Dear Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Cate and Kropf and Committee Members:

In its 95-year history, the Billy Webb Elks Lodge has served the traditionally African American neighborhood of Albina as a Black YWCA, a USO center for black servicemen, and as a Black Elks Lodge at a time when the Elks organization did not allow black members. Today, the lodge uses the building for community services and as a social gathering place providing an environment that promotes safety, dignity, respect, and pride for people of all colors who have long and deep ties to the Albina community.

We were recently honored with designation in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the African American Resources in Portland, Oregon, 1865-1973 Multiple Property Designation—an important step towards recognizing and preserving Black history. This process, along with our partnership with Restore Oregon, has allowed us to make meaningful steps towards securing the future of our building and protect our heritage in the face of mounting pressure to sell and redevelop the site. Additionally, it has helped us begin to recover from a tragic fire set to our building—our sole asset—on September 11.

The leadership of Billy Webb Elks Lodge **supports passage of HB 4040** and encourages you to *equitably* invest \$50 million in the continued recovery of Oregon’s cultural sector, especially in support of the **vital small nonprofits like ours that remain in deep distress all across the State**. We are concerned that the full range of diverse arts and culture nonprofit organizations **may be at a disadvantage, or worse, be excluded entirely** from eligibility for this lifeline of financial support.

Please consider the following:

1. Section 2, lines 13-18 broadly define a “cultural organization” yet lines 24-25 seem to tightly constrict the funding to just three subsets of cultural organizations: “venues, performing arts and museums” Many small cultural organizations, like those in the heritage and humanities sectors, do not fit into these three sub-categories. Clarifying the intent behind which organizations should be eligible for funding would ensure equitable access and broad investment.
2. Section 2, lines 8-12 narrowly define “earned revenue” in a way that favors for-profit entities and creates a significant disadvantage for nonprofit cultural organizations who cannot define revenue only as “sales of goods or services.” A simple clarification to ensure that meaningful revenue loss from a nonprofit is also accepted as part of the definition might be:

(a)(A) <<Earned revenue>> means income from the sales of goods or services, including, but not limited to, admission tickets, merchandise, food and beverages, advertising sales and contracted presentation income and/or charitable donations.

(B) <<Earned revenue>> does not include other sources of income, including, but not limited to, donations, federal, state and local governmental assistance or returns on investments.

All of Oregon’s cultural organizations are desperate for financial help and will continue to need critical support until the pandemic subsides. By working together, nonprofits, for-profits, and the Oregon Legislature can equitably build back this large, vital sector of Oregon’s economy with the passage of HB 4040.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With Kind Regards,

Louis McLemore
Exalted Ruler
Billy Webb Elks Lodge #1050
Portland