



**Lane Arts Council**

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January 29, 2023

Dear House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business,

I am writing in support of HB 2459 to provide \$50 million in recovery dollars for Oregon's arts and culture sector and additional relief funding for our state's cultural institutions. As Lane County's local arts agency based in Eugene, Lane Arts Council is on the frontlines with hundreds of Lane County arts organizations, cultural institutions, and artists. Our mission is to strengthen arts communities in Lane County, and we are well aware of the difficulties still being faced in our sector.

It is clear that our arts community is still being deeply affected by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Relief funding has diminished and yet we are *still* in the pandemic and a gradual recovery that will continue beyond 2023. Patrons and participants are slow to return to in-person events, gatherings, and fundraisers, many of which continue to be cancelled or further postponed. The long-lasting financial devastation of COVID-related closures had a deep impact that is being amplified by inflation and the slower than anticipated return of in-person audiences, supporters, and participants.

And yet, artists, arts organizations, and creative change makers are central to our communities' efforts to innovate, reconnect, celebrate, heal, and recover. Arts and culture is deeply embedded in the economic, social, and cultural fabric of Oregon communities. For nonprofit arts organizations in Eugene alone, the arts generate \$62 million in economic activity, support 2,400 jobs, and build vibrant communities that attract visitors and are a primary driver for tourism. This impact is twice as significant compared to the median of similarly sized regions around the country.

Additional recovery funds will support a sector that is truly the heart and soul of our communities. In this time of economic instability, political polarity, learning disparities, and social disconnection, it is arts and culture that will bring us together, connect us to our communities, drive economic activity, and help us thrive.

Gratefully,

Stacey Ray  
Executive Director, Lane Arts Council