

Dear House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business,

At a time when people are exhausted by COVID, Artichoke Community Music is still struggling to bring back audiences to its venue, students to its music school, and customers to its music store.

Three years of loss of revenue and inability to create non-profit impact under our 501(c)(3) charter have created a double-whammy in terms of lower revenues and less opportunity for mission-focused grants.

While 2023 looks more promising than prior years, it will take effort and community/legislative support to address the loss of foot traffic and top-of-mind destination habits that made Artichoke Music one of Portland's top culture contributors — we are in our 50th year in the city as we speak, and we are struggling to set ourselves up for the next year or two. The cash flow and grant benefits need support and de-risking now.

As for the economic impact in the town, Artichoke Music's output has always had multiplier effects: We support a vibrant music scene through our unique, well-regarded venue, which builds the brands and followership of hundreds of regional musicians, and contributes materially to the livability and attractiveness of Portland as a destination city for tourists and new residents. Our emphasis on singer/songwriters, Americana, acoustic, blues, bluegrass, jazz, and more, is truly a catalog of creativity. Our school and workshops add to this by adding more employment and revenue options for the artists in our town, and building a new generation of musicians and consumers of Portland's culture scene. Finally, our store offers unique, hard-to-find instruments that nevertheless can be in demand again. We sold through significant instrument inventory prior to the pandemic. We need support to get these customers back. They're out there. We need time, operational support, and community outreach support to get the students, teachers, and schools to build us into their wallet-share and self-development plans.

Please help by supporting legislation. We will do our part in supporting economic impact, and can help you collect data that shows the value of what you do as a committee and as legislators.

Yours,

Paul  
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Paul K. Ward

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A 501(c)(3) presenting Portland's music for everyone to hear and love.

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