

Submitter: Octavio Solis

On Behalf Of: OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB2459

February 1, 2023

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND SMALL BUSINESS
OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE

Dear Chairperson Rep. Janelle Bynum and members of the committee:

- Rep. Morgan
- Rep. Nguyen
- Rep. Diehl
- Rep. Elmer
- Rep. Javadi
- Rep. Lively
- Rep. Osborne
- Rep. Pham
- Rep. Ruiz
- Rep. Walters

I am writing to urge your support of House Bill 2459 as the measure comes to a hearing. As a playwright who has worked at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland since 1999 and as a resident of Jackson County, I have seen first-hand the devastation that the fires and the Covid pandemic have wreaked on our community, and I am asking that you approve of a minimum of \$50m. in order to restore the Arts and Cultural Sector of the Rogue Valley as it recovers from the terrible losses we have incurred.

I serve as a board member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival now and am privy to the rallying efforts of Nataki Garrett, our Artistic Director, as she fights to keep our treasured theatre company going strong. But patrons and attendees have been slow to return to in-person gatherings and company members with Covid-19 have impacted our performances. Our Endowment Fund has made incredible sacrifices and contributions to ensure that the 2023 season continues as planned, but the Stock Market has taken a huge bite out of the market value of our Endowment. Therefore, we need your help!

Ashland merchants and small businesses rely on the great theatre art of the OSF from March through December every year in a deeply symbiotic relationship that

cannot be understated. So does the rest of the state and, indeed, the country. I urge you to please pass House Bill 2459 with the largest funding possible for the survival of our institution.

Sincerely,
Octavio Solis