

PORTLAND OPERA

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Submitter: Sue Dixon, General Director
On Behalf of: Portland Opera
Committee: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Measure: HB2459 Arts Recovery Funding Bill

April 7, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Member of the Committee:

My name is Sue Dixon, and I am the General Director of Portland Opera. I also serve on the board of directors for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, as well as the board of directors of OPERA America, a national service organization. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure, as well as the entire slate of arts and culture bills in this year's legislative session.

Our arts and cultural sector remains in crisis as we attempt to recover from pandemic closures. Our overall sales and capacities at Portland Opera remain impacted, while we attempt to stabilize and build back from crises and loss. We are hearing from our peers, as well as midsize and smaller organizations every day: our community is in crisis and we are trying to help each other get through these incredibly challenging times.

According to Americans for the Arts, Oregon currently ranks 36th among all states in arts funding per capita, a drop from a just a few years ago. That ranking is not going to help this state achieve its potential for quality of life, education, or growth in attracting new businesses and professionals. We know that Oregon's future depends, in part, on a healthy arts, cultural, and heritage sector.

Our sector generates hundreds of millions of dollars of economic activity in our state annually, and our recovery is tied to the hospitality and restaurant industry, as well as the revitalization and reopening of downtown Portland. As one of the largest arts employers in the state, we want to see the arts and cultural sector, and the wonderful people who power it, find a sustainable and thriving path forward.

We need your help. Please support HB 2459 and 2498.

Thank you,

Sue Dixon, General Director
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