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Dan Drinkward, Chair
Isaac Thompson, President and CEO

February 9, 2024

Chair Taylor and members of the committee:

The Oregon Symphony urgently requires resiliency funding to sustain its vital programs and services for the Oregon community. The Symphony alone, with an 8:1 return on dollars spent by arts organizations per [Americans for the Arts](#), generates nearly \$200 million in economic activity for our region. The organization employs nearly 120 Oregonians full-time in its orchestra and staff, and over 300 more part-time through local labor unions.

Despite implementing budget cuts, audience recovery efforts, and securing private funds, the Symphony continues to face a significant financial gap between expenses and revenues. This gap is attributed to patrons' reluctance to return downtown—citing concerns such as safety, inadequate police presence, and the visible impacts of homeless communities—combined with overall inflation and escalating local government fees.

Without immediate short-term financial assistance (\$5.9 million) to help stabilize leading anchor arts and cultural institutions, these institutions—including the Oregon Symphony—will see a significant reduction in operations and cancelled performances in 2024. This will have a deleterious effect on the vitality of our region at a time when we need to be building, not shrinking.

Senate Bill 1582 will support local arts and cultural organizations, giving them the relief they need to be a part of their communities' revitalization and economic resurgence following the pandemic. ***Please prioritize \$5.9 million in direct funding for Oregon's Major Venues: High Desert Museum, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Oregon Symphony, Portland Art Museum, Portland Center Stage, and Portland Opera.***

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isaac Thompson".

Isaac Thompson
President & CEO
Oregon Symphony