

To the Oregon House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business:

My name is Sarah Tiedemann, and I represent the musicians of the Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra, where I serve as Chair of the Orchestra Players' Committee. I'm also Artistic Director of Third Angle New Music, a contemporary music and interdisciplinary arts organization that has been around for nearly 40 years.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 4124.

Our statewide arts ecosystem is interconnected. Those of us who populate the ranks of Portland's music organizations spend summers in the Eugene area performing at the Bach Festival, in Southern Oregon at the Britt Festival, in orchestras and festivals at the coast, and at small- and mid-sized organizations throughout the state. That includes my organization Third Angle New Music, which last May played a show at the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum under the tail of the Spruce Goose. We teach at colleges across the state, allowing Oregonian students access to great teachers so they can stay and utilize our state's incredible university system. We run and teach at arts camps across the state, from Young Musicians and Artists in Salem, to Wallowa Lake Music Camps in the Wallowa Mountains of NE Oregon. We're everywhere.

We give Oregonians a place to escape the challenges of their daily lives, to feel deeply, to gain inspiration, and to sit next to one another each holiday season at the Nutcracker and connect in a nonpartisan way.

As we all know, Portland is struggling, and our downtown faces an existential moment. It seems that offices are not going to return in pre-pandemic numbers. Online shopping is unfortunately not going away.

What can still reliably draw people into the heart of the city? The arts industry and the restaurant industry. We are the answer for reinvigorating Portland. If people are no longer working nearby, vibrant culture is the best reason for them to want to live in the central city. We give people a reason to visit. We help define the culture that, along with the stunning nature of the Pacific NW, has helped to define our state.

We also are a huge part of Oregon's economy. The economic and cultural impact of the arts applies to urban centers, suburban cultural districts, and small town Oregon's single-street downtowns.

In October, Americans for the Arts released its Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study, showing that the Oregon arts and culture industry generated \$829 million in economic impact in FY 2022. That level of contribution was even during an early stage of pandemic recovery. As we know, event spending includes not just tickets to performances, but also meals, parking, shopping, babysitting, and hotel stays.

And as we continue to contribute to our state's economy, artists and administrators are still working like crazy in the background to return audience attendance to pre-pandemic levels. The exodus from downtown continues to affect us, as we are constantly fighting people's concerns about coming downtown safely. Frankly, we are exhausted, but we remain committed.

Simply put, our home needs us, and we need all of you.

Our organizations have taken a hit since 2020, and so have this state's artists. In the same way that local economies are bolstered by us, a thriving arts industry enables us personally to put food on our tables and support our families. We have taught online, performed online, scheduled and rescheduled, lost funds not just in gig revenue but in the added expenses of multiple years of constantly changing plans—childcare expenses, for one. We rely on these organizations just like a worker at a manufacturing plant relies on the company that employs them.

We want to move forward and be a part of recapturing our state's pre-pandemic vibrancy, and artists and arts organizations need this financial support to do it.

Please support the entirety of House Bill 4124. Thank you again for your time.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Tiedemann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Tiedemann
Chair, Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra Committee
Artistic Director, Third Angle New Music