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NATURAL RESOURCES
WATER, PARKS AND WILDLIFE

May 17, 2021

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub #4
State Capitol, Room 4167
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub #3
State Capitol, Room 2003
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Budget Request: \$1 Billion Relief / Stimulus for California Arts, Creativity, and Culture

Dear Chairs Ting, Carrillo, and Bloom,

Thank you for your continued leadership in these challenging times, and for the ability to make late adjustments to our budget priorities so that we can better meet the needs of California considering our improved fiscal outlook. The arts, culture and creative industries ecosystem in California is vast and impactful representing over 8% of the GSP for the state, ahead of the construction and transportation industries, and employing over 750,000 workers. What largely binds the ecosystem together is a reliance on revenue from live events, indoor attractions, gatherings, and group participation which has largely been shut down for over a year due to the risk of COVID-19.

California's COVID-19 response has meant long-term closures for our museums, live events, and performing arts industries. California's museums are the last to be allowed any kind of indoor activities, and concert venues, theaters, and festivals are only now seeing a path toward eventual reopening. The situation is dire for California's 103,000 creative businesses and 764,000 creative workers.

To relieve the impacts of COVID-19 closures we are proposing a \$1 billion budget expenditure that would provide much-needed and targeted relief to the arts, culture, and creative industries over the next two to four years.

Federal relief funds and windfall state tax receipts have given California a unique opportunity to make a substantial investment that could help stabilize the sector with several years of stimulus. This investment in California's arts, culture, and creativity industries will help overcome the challenges of state-imposed COVID-19 restrictions on our ability to operate. We propose to allocate the \$1 billion in the FY 2021-2022 budget year but allow the funds to be spent by December 2024.

Support for Community Access to Arts: \$400 million allocation over three years as a one-time increase to the existing general fund allocation of \$26 million to the California Arts Council to expand existing grants programs including Cultural Districts, arts in schools and general operating support and to establish the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund which will direct critical relief funding to artists and production workers. Small Nonprofit Performing Arts Companies (SNPACs) historically have been undercapitalized and underfunded, yet contribute to the economic growth, social well-being and cultural vitality of the local communities they serve. Many SNPACs are culturally rooted and are considered the onramp and incubator for new works and opportunities for emerging performers and people entering the creative performing arts industries. This funding will help assist SNPACs create and preserve job opportunities for performers and people in the performing arts sector, particularly workers in marginalized communities.

Support for Creative Workforce Development: \$100 million to workforce development and jobs training programs to employ workers in all aspects of the creative economy industries. The training program would focus on developing marketable skills and living wage employment in the arts with particular prioritization for low-income, unemployed, and disadvantaged persons beginning their careers in the creative arts. Creative industries are integral to rebuilding California and workforce development must be the focus to rebuild the economy.

Support for Independent Venues: \$250 million in a grants program to be distributed by CAL-OSBA for for-profit independent venues and nonprofit cultural organizations to reopen and bring economic vitality back to every community across CA. This program, which would use existing infrastructure to deliver grants, would identify revenue loss and the gaps in funding due to limited capacity reopening plans.

Support for Museums and Cultural Institutions: \$250 million to the California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) to be distributed competitively to government entities, non-profit organizations, and Tribal Organizations for the acquisition, restoration, preservation, and interpretation of California's historical and cultural resources. Of this amount, \$50 million will go to the Museum Grant Program administered by the Natural Resources Agency for capital projects or programs that support and enhance museums services and serve historically underserved communities and/or students subject to Title 1 of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember Laura Friedman,
43rd Assembly District



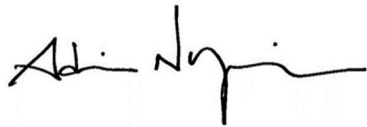
Senator Susan Rubio
22nd Senate District



Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva,
65th Assembly District



Senator Ben Allen,
26th Senate District



Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian,
46th Assembly District

cc: The Honorable Speaker Anthony Rendon