

Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

Date: May 10, 2021
To: Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business
From: Rachel Olson, Legislative Analyst
Re: LD 1566 Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development To Create and Administer a Fund for Live Entertainment Venue, Performer and Workers and Public Art Recovery Grants (EMERGENCY) (Collings)

Bill Summary

This resolve directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to create and administer a fund to provide grants to live entertainment venues including businesses and performers and nonemployee workers, to compensate for the loss of revenue and profits due to state-ordered closures or restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19, and for public art to be funded partly by any federal funds received by the State in 2021 eligible to be used for that purpose. For the purpose of this resolve, a live entertainment venue includes any business operation providing entertainment, including theater, music, other performing arts, cinema, sports, lectures or horse or harness racing, at a venue in which customers attend in person to view the entertainment. The program is based on the Maine Tourism, Hospitality and Retail Recovery Grant Program operated by the department to disburse past federal stimulus and recovery funds to counter the adverse economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resolve appropriates \$10,000,000 to the fund and directs that \$20,000,000 of any funds received from the Federal Government in 2021 that are eligible to be used for the purposes of this resolve be allocated to the fund.

Testimony:

Proponents: Representative Collings, sponsor; Senator Hickman, cosponsor; Representative Dodge, cosponsor; Representative Sachs, cosponsor; Representative Roeder, cosponsor; Riley Armstrong, Maine Mariners; Lauren Wayne, State Theater; Douglas Born, IATSE; Nick Turner, The Grand in Ellsworth; David Greenham, The Maine Arts Commission; Frank Hopkins; Aimee Petrin, Portland Ovations; Carla Pugliese, Cultural Alliance of Maine; Anita Stewart, Portland Stage; Griffin Sherry, Ghosts of Paul Revere; Jack Murray; Gina Alibrio; Jeff Beam, One Longfellow Square; Ken Bell, Portland House of Music and Events; Daniel Boyden; Maxwell Cantlin; John Cariani; J. Andrew Chasman, Preti Flaherty representing Theatre Owners of New England; Curt Dale Clark, Maine State Music Theater; Jamie Colpoys, Rustic Overtones, Gina and the Red Eye Flight Crew, and The Fogcutters; Owen Conforte; Viva Crupi, VIVA & The Reinforcements; Travis Cyr; Sarah Hansen, Greater Portland Landmarks; Brian Hinrichs, Bangor Symphony Orchestra; Tricia Hobbs, Corleen Iannazzi, Bari Newport, Jennifer Shepard, Penobscot Theatre Company; Dominic Lavoie; William Lederer; Stu Mahan; Bridget Matros, Waterfall Arts; Dawn McAndrews, Theater at Monmouth; Karen Merritt; Alan Mooney, Cadenza; Dave Morrison, Camden Opera House; Jessica Muise, Engine, Inc.; Carolyn Nishon, Portland Symphony Orchestra; Jonathan Quist; C S; Nancy Salmon, Arts and Cultural Alliance of Freeport; Sam Shain; Cathy Stackpole, Ferry Beach Retreat and Conference Center; Emma Stanley; Colin Winsor; Carole Palmer, Saco and Portland Stage Co.;

Opponents: None

Neither for nor against: Kate Foye, DECD;

Potential Issues or Technical Problems:

The resolve seeks to use federal funds, for which formal guidance has yet to be released.

DECD indicated a potential issue with paying artists for work.

Additional Information:

- [The Shuttered Venue Operators Grant \(SVOG\) program](#)

At the public hearing, a similar program in New Hampshire was mentioned. According to the New Hampshire Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery, they are reviewing the federal SBA Shuttered Venue Program to determine where New Hampshire venues may be left behind. The program will be designed to address gaps in available federal relief.¹

In testimony provided by DECD, the department indicated its intent to try to supplement the need that is not met after the SVOG program awards have been made.

Possible Amendments:

After the public hearing, the sponsor suggested limiting the scope of the resolve and suggested that such a program could be administered under the Maine Arts Commission, rather than DECD. The sponsor indicated that, with the committee's permission, the sponsor could continue to work with the Maine Arts Commission and DECD and come back with a full amendment later this week.

Fiscal Impact: Not yet determined.

The resolve provides an appropriations and allocations section, which has a one-time appropriation of \$10,000,000 from the general fund in fiscal year 21/22. It also contains a section that would allocate \$20,000,000 of federal funds received by the State in 2021 that would be eligible for the purposes of this resolve.

¹ <https://www.goferr.nh.gov/apply>