

May 3, 2021

Dear Honorable Members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee:

My name is Sarah Hansen and I am the Executive Director of Greater Portland Landmarks. Founded in 1964, Greater Portland Landmarks' mission is to preserve and revitalize greater Portland's remarkable legacy of historic buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes and parks. Our goal is to save greater Portland's historic places through preservation and adaptive reuse while promoting creative new architecture that enhances historic neighborhoods.

We are providing testimony to indicate our **strong support for LD 1566: (Emergency) Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development To Create and Administer a Fund for Live Entertainment Venue, Performer and Worker and Public Art Recovery Grants.**

In March 2020, like all other businesses and organizations, our work was turned upside down by COVID-19. We had to cancel our annual Gala- our largest fundraiser- and we made the difficult decision to not open the Portland Observatory for the summer season (May – October). Additionally, we had to suspend all walking tours, public programs and events. Business partnerships have been increasingly difficult to secure as the pandemic has devastated many of our supporters. Philanthropic leaders and foundations we typically rely on have pivoted to fund frontline pandemic response, so as a heritage and culture organization we have found ourselves categorized as nonessential. As a result, we urge you to consider all cultural organizations as part of the defined eligible businesses.

Arts, heritage and culture are critically important to Maine, not just to our economy, but to our sense of self, place and authenticity. As our cultural sector moves towards rebuilding sustainable businesses, organizations and communities, we urge you to adopt LD 1566 and provide ongoing financial support for this highly successful and critically important work. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions that you may have regarding our support of LD 1566.

Cordially,



Sarah Hansen
Executive Director