

Bridget Matros  
Waterfall Arts

Many of us in the arts have been hoping the pandemic would bring about something like the New Works Projects implemented as part of The New Deal during the Great Depression. Several national initiatives served as work-relief programs for artists and cultural institutions that not only helped the sector survive but actually fueled a renaissance of American art. Whether you're an art educator like me or a regular Joe walking through any city in America, you see and experience outcomes of this federal initiative almost 100 years later.

The Director of the WPA Federal Art project, Holger Cahill said, "the organization of the Project has proceeded on the principle that it is not solitary genius but a sound general movement which maintains art as a vital, functioning part of any cultural scheme. Art is not a matter of rare, occasional masterpieces."

The bill proposed offers a shot at a historic mini-renaissance with lasting effects - working artists are not just kept in their homes with bills paid, but are able to create public art of significance to communities throughout the state. A map of roadtrip-worthy art pieces from Kittery to Caribou, where visitors will also be able to catch a live performance or two. The absence of which creates not just an economic vacuum, but a break in the pipeline of the next generation of creators and consumers. I hope you will take seriously the impact this bill would make not on artists, but on the state of Maine, as a whole.