



Cultural Alliance of Maine & Maine Association of Nonprofits

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 1566

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 [Emergency]

MAY 4, 2021

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and esteemed members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business, I am Carla Pugliese, Director of the Pilot Year of the Cultural Alliance of Maine, a project within the Maine Association of Nonprofits.

The Cultural Alliance of Maine (CAM) is a grassroots, statewide initiative designed to bring together Maine's rich and diverse cultural communities in a thriving, collaborative, unified ecosystem with the goal of increasing the sector's visibility, impact, and resources. Less than two months into its pilot year, CAM represents cultural organizations and artists from all 16 counties of Maine.

MANP's mission is to enrich the quality of Maine's communities by strengthening the leadership, voice, and organizational effectiveness of our state's nonprofits. MANP represents nearly 1000 nonprofit organizations and 200 corporate supporters from every part of the state and of all sizes and mission areas.

On behalf of the members of both organizations, this testimony is in Support of 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 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that arts and cultural sector added \$1.7 billion dollars to the state economy and employed over 17,000 Mainers. The real numbers are likely even higher, as these data do not include the full breadth of the cultural sector, leaving out historical societies, historical preservation organizations, and many of the libraries that serve as community hubs – and sponsors of public works, such as the art grants included in this bill – in small towns throughout the state, including my home of Waterford.

Maine's nonprofit sector is the largest employment sector in the state - 1 in 6 workers is employed by a nonprofit. However, most nonprofits in Maine are also small businesses - 89% have annual budgets of \$500,000 or less and 77% have annual budgets of \$100,000 or less. They want to provide their employees with good wages, good working conditions, benefits, and opportunity for advancement and growth.

In the past year, cultural organizations and artists have introduced innumerable innovative programs to make their work accessible to a quarantined audience in a digital landscape.

Across the state, they have seen community engagement – already so significant – grow, as folks turned to the arts to help process the upheaval of the past 13 months. At the same time, these organizations and artists have had to shut down nearly all of their revenue generating programs, and many do not foresee a full programmatic return until 2022. Integral to our communities, and our economy, they deserve our support.

Thank you for considering LD 1566. I am happy to answer any questions and provide more information after the hearing.