



Power of culture

January 7, 2021

His Excellency Charles D. Baker
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Re: H. 5250 – An Act enabling partnerships for growth

Dear Governor Baker:

On behalf of the Council members and staff of the Mass Cultural Council, I wish to outline the significance of various items contained within H. 5250, the 2020 Economic Development Bond Bill, for the cultural sector. Respectfully, I urge you to retain them all when you act on this legislation.

This legislation is an important tool, providing capital for public investment to help rebuild the Commonwealth's economy. As evidenced by the unfunded eligible applications to the recent [Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Grant Program](#), on which we partnered with your Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development, the cultural sector is experiencing great unmet need. Further public support and investment is necessary to provide relief to nonprofit cultural organizations and individual cultural practitioners from the impacts of COVID-19.

In October, cultural nonprofits reported [\\$484 million](#) in lost revenue due to the pandemic, and that more than 30,000 cultural jobs have been impacted since March 2020. Clearly, the state economy cannot completely rebound without the full restoration of our once vibrant sector.

H. 5250 includes \$31 million in new capital spending authorizations to support the cultural sector, to be administered by Mass Cultural Council, including:

- \$6 million for a new competitive grant program to promote artists and cultural organizations and enhance ways increase remote access and promote remote programming in response to COVID-19 (see account 0640-0303 in H. 5250)
- \$5 million for a new competitive grant program to assist public school districts provide student access to cultural experiences in the community (see account 0640-0304 in H. 5250)

- \$20 million for a new competitive non-profit infrastructure and equipment grant program to help nonprofit arts, cultural organizations, and tourism institutions with COVID-related capital projects necessary to safely and sustainably reopen to the public.

Additionally, Outside Section 99 of the bill establishes a special commission to study the impact of COVID-19 on the creative and cultural sector and make recommendations for recovery. Mass Cultural Council has a seat on this commission and believes that this is an important conversation to undertake.

Mass Cultural Council urges you to sign these three new capital accounts and Outside Section 99 into law. We believe these authorizations to be impactful tools and look forward to continued collaborations with your Administration this year to ensure Massachusetts' cultural sector once again thrives. Further, we hope to begin conversations with your Administration & Finance and Economic Development teams to discuss how these capital funds might be employed in your FY22 capital plan.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters, and of course for your leadership and support. Please do not hesitate to contact [Bethann Steiner](#), our Public Affairs Director, if Mass Cultural Council can provide further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David T. Slatery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

David T. Slatery
Acting Executive Director