



To: Chris Dombrowski, Che Salina, GoBiz  
From: Julie Baker, California Arts Advocates  
October 1, 2020

Thank you for your time today and for all your efforts to provide guidelines by industry to safely reopen California.

### **Background**

In August California Arts Advocates conducted nine regional conversations with artists and arts organizations across the state. It was apparent from our survey of close to 1000 attendees that the **current priority need for our sector, even beyond the need for funding, is for the state to issue consistent and safe reopening guidelines for all manner of live performances.**

We recently formed a task force of forty arts leaders to reopen arts safely. We have members from across the state representing dance, opera, symphony, for profit and non-profit venues, entertainment labor unions and theatres. We want to work to provide solutions that will help guide the safe reopening of live performances. We are a unified and organized group ready to support and activate towards these goals.

### **Comparable guidelines for similar use scenarios**

As a sector we see **similar use scenarios** for live performances of music, dance and theater to fit into the existing categories such as places of worship and cultural ceremonies, movie theaters, museums, tv and production, professional sports, family entertainment centers and even gyms.

For example, why are places of worship and cultural ceremonies different in use from a live performance event? Although we see that it is recommended to discontinue signing and chanting, it does not list protocols to safely have a performer or a speaker orating from a podium. The performing arts sector would want those in place and Actor's Equity is producing such guidelines for venues across the U.S. In fact, a group of small theater producers in LA in collaboration with Actor's Equity is doing a very thorough job of creating guidelines to produce

outdoor events as well as indoor rehearsals and taping or live streaming of productions we would love to share with you.

### **Indoor performance, no audience, guidelines clarification**

Your website states “music, TV, and film production may resume, subject to approval by county public health officers.” Should we then refer other counties to use the guidelines developed by LA County as applicable to provide guidelines for indoor taping of live performances such as music, theater and dance for live streaming? This would be a massive benefit to our sector to keep artists employed, audiences engaged and venues activated. Or is the state going to issue their own guidance on indoor performances without audiences more specific to music, dance and theater?

### **Outdoor events guidelines**

In today’s call you shared guidelines for outdoor live events, 25% capacity, fixed venues in yellow tiers only. The guidelines you shared today are a great first step but they seem to be designed more for the larger touring companies such as Live Nation and AEG. We want to ensure that smaller organizations and venues have an opportunity to open again as well. There are thousands of arts nonprofits and for profits across the state in urban and rural communities that are vital to their community’s economic and mental recovery but lack a fixed outdoor venue. Could the guidelines include venues such as parks, restaurants or other mixed-use spaces?

At this time the guidelines you shared today indicate to our sector that no indoor performances with live audiences will be allowed until there is a vaccine. We are hopeful that we can come up together with safe guidelines to reopen the arts indoors with limited capacity before there is a vaccine. No industry can survive being shut down for 18-24 months. We also hope you will reconsider putting outdoor performances with limited capacity audiences in an earlier tier than stage four (yellow) as you have for other similar use industries.

### **Impact on our Sector**

Sixty-five percent of arts and culture workers in the U.S. are unemployed. A recent creative-industry analysis from the Brookings Institute estimates losses of 450,000 jobs and \$43.1 billion in revenue for arts, culture and entertainment in California alone. It is clear that unless we come up with guidelines for the arts to reopen safely it will be almost impossible for our sector to survive the crisis. We also know artists and organizations will figure out work-arounds (which are already happening) and without guidance we are concerned about the potential for rogue and unsafe behaviors that could lead to the continued spread of the virus. Many county public health agencies have told our member arts organizations that their hands are tied until the state issues guidelines. Smaller

counties have indicated they simply do not have the capacity to create their own guidelines or shut down organizations that are producing live events without authorization.

The performing arts sector has studies from epidemiologists and medical officials to show that we can reopen safely outdoors and even indoors with restrictions. We are hoping the administration will work with us to develop guidelines that address the myriad configurations in which the arts present and produce live events. From the instrumentalist in front of an eating establishment or hotel to a symphony orchestra in a fixed venue; from a comedian or solo dancer to a theatrical production with staging, costume and lights, we are not a one size fits all model.

We know the arts are not only an economic driver for every community in CA, they also provide the social and emotional wellbeing we so desperately need right now. Producing state guidelines for live performing arts events to happen outdoors and depending on the county tier indoors for streaming or with limited audiences is a critical and urgent need for California. Thank you for addressing it today. Our sector is ready to get back to work, we just need the state, like many other states have already, to issue the guidelines to make this happen.

**Guidelines needed for arts, culture & entertainment in CA:**

Live Performance, outdoors, limited capacity, not a permanent and fixed facility (consideration for example of parks with attendees bringing their own seating and assigned areas so this accessible for community's without outdoor venues)

Live Performance, indoors, no audience

Live Performance, indoors, limited audience, no services (bar or food)