The Honorable Steven Harris, Chair
House Revenue and Taxation Committee
Idaho State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID  83720-0054

RE: HB 253- Adds to existing law to require provisions for authorizing the expenditure of property tax revenues on public art by any taxing district.

Dear Chairman Harris:

On behalf of the Idaho Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Idaho), I am writing to register my organization's recommendation for tabling of House Bill 253. This bill relates to the use of public funds for public art.

Our organization represents more than 250 local planning officials, private-sector planners, and planning commission members statewide. We are the technicians, professionals, policy and decision makers who represent the public interest in carrying out the authorities vested with local governments under Idaho’s Local Land Use Planning Act, Title 67, Chapter 65 of the Idaho Statutes.

APA Idaho is extremely surprised by this proposal and are concerned about the unintended consequences of this bill. It appears that there is a misunderstanding about the role art plays in our communities and in our vibrant economy.

For your reference, we have attached a factsheet to the letter to help you understand the importance art plays in our state. Here are few important points from this fact sheet:

- The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector contribute $1.9 billion to Idaho’s economy, representing 2.8% of the state’s GDP (2016)
- In Idaho, 2,921 Arts-Related Businesses employ 10,815 people (2017)
- In Wood River Valley specifically, nonprofit arts groups generated $15.5 million in economic activity. Audiences of 201,517 people added another $13.8 million for a total of $29.3 million in economic activity for the valley in 2015, and this generated $2.1 million in local and state government revenues.

There should be little question as to whether there is a public benefit to art in our communities. We understand that this bill is intended to save taxpayers from the use of “property tax revenue” for these art projects. However, APA Idaho supports allowing local officials and local citizens to determine the services, funding and process that are vital to their communities. Moreover, the additional cost
communities will incur through the “election” process of approving the projects, may completely negate any potential savings and if not approved, rob the community of a vital economic asset.

Finally, we want to remind you that public art is one of the most useful tools in attracting people to a community and/or building a community’s identity. If one Google’s “Idaho Public Art”, you can see amazing projects from around the state – Coeur d’Alene, Moscow, Boise, McCall, Meridian, Ketchum, Driggs, Idaho Falls and Twin Falls. These are amazing places in this beautiful state of ours. Limiting the ability of the elected officials, in these communities, to create and implement projects that will attract people to their communities, create an identity for their communities and provide an economic benefit to their communities does not seem to be in the best interest of the citizens of the state.

We truly appreciate your service to the citizens of this great state. We would greatly appreciate consideration of our informed opinion on matters related to land use, transportation, housing and community development in Idaho. We would support additional dialog and further understanding of the true impacts of HB 253.

Please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Jason Boal- AICP, CFM
APA Idaho Legislative Committee, Chair

Attachment; American for the Arts Action Fund – Why the arts matter in Idaho.

Cc:
Honorable Representative Jim Addis
Honorable Representative Mike Moyle
Honorable Representative Greg Chaney
Honorable Representative Terry Gestrin
Honorable Representative Sage G. Dixon
Honorable Representative Tammy Nichols
Honorable Representative Clark Kauffman
Honorable Representative Ben Adams
Honorable Representative David M. Cannon

Honorable Representative Linda Wright Hartgen
Honorable Representative Dustin Manwaring
Honorable Representative Doug Okuniewicz
Honorable Representative Aaron von Ehlinger
Honorable Representative Jon O. Weber
Honorable Representative Lauren Necochea
Honorable Representative James D. Ruchti
APA Idaho Executive Board
Association of Idaho Cities
Idaho Association of Counties
**GDP & JOBS**

**NATIONAL ARTS FACTS**

**ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR’S PERCENTAGE OF U.S ECONOMY**

(Artists, University Arts, Commercial & Nonprofit Arts Organizations Combined)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>GDP Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Culture Sector</td>
<td>$804 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>$746 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>$244 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BUSINESSES & JOBS**

**NUMBER OF ARTS-RELATED BUSINESSES AND JOBS**

(Commercial & Nonprofit Arts Organizations Combined)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Businesses</th>
<th>Total Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>673,656</td>
<td>3,480,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ECONOMICS**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & THEIR AUDIENCES**

Nationally, the nonprofit arts industry alone generates $166.3 billion in economic activity annually that supports 4.6 million jobs and generates $27.5 billion in federal, state, and local government revenue.

- Spending by arts audiences generated $102.5 billion to local businesses.


**PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN GRANTS TO NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS & ARTISTS**

**FUNDING**

**Q** How much is the federal government investing in the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)?

**A** Congress has proposed allocating $162.25 million to the NEA in FY 2020, which has been relatively level for the last several years. This amounts to just $49 per capita, yet the nonprofit arts industry generates over $13 billion in federal tax revenue back to the treasury. Imagine what nonprofit arts groups could generate with $1 per capita!


Read: *Funding The Arts is Good For the Nation,* The Hill, 2015.

**Q** What about Idaho—how much does state government budget to the Idaho Commission on the Arts each year?

**A** The state allocated $884,700 to the Idaho Commission on the Arts. In FY 2019-20, the Idaho Commission received $791,200 in federal NEA funds, which the Commission used to help cultural organizations throughout the state. Another 9 nonprofit arts organizations received direct grants from the NEA totaling $165,000.


Read: *Investing in the Arts is Good Business,* Mark Rudin, Idaho Stateman.
IN THE GEM STATE, THE ARTS UNITE US

Youthreach brought performances by Ballet Idaho and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble to 1,430 students from 13 Idaho schools. Each program included study guides, narratives, and audience participation and Q-and-A sessions with the artists.

THE IDAHO COMMISSION ON THE ARTS (ICA) was established by Governor Don Samuelson in 1967. The commission enables access to the arts, arts education, and Idahoans’ cultural and artistic heritage. ICA provides management services for Idaho’s not-for-profit arts organizations, helping to stabilize their operations so that they can reliably deliver their public programs in the arts. >Learn more here.

MEET SOME IDAHO ARTS ADVOCATES

- Mark Hoffland is Managing Director of the Idaho Shakespeare Festival. > More
- Laurel Sayer is President and CEO of Midas Gold Idaho. > More
- Michael Faison is Executive Director of the Idaho Commission on the Arts. > More
- Kristin Poole is Director of Sun Valley for the Arts and recipient of the 2018 Governor’s Award for the Arts for Excellence in Arts Administration. > More
- Carolyn White is Executive Director of Magic Valley Arts and a recipient of the Governor’s Award for the Arts for Excellence in Arts Administration. > More

ARTS IN IDAHO

- Best Things Idaho lists the best place for live theater here.
- Visit Idaho can direct you to the best music festivals here.
- Art-Collecting.com has a directory of art galleries and art museums to visit here.
- And go to Art Idaho for an interactive map on great state-wide cultural destinations here.

IDAHO ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Idaho Falls Arts Council: www.idahofallsarts.org
Coeur d’Alene Arts and Culture Alliance: www.artsandculturecda.org

THE ARTS ARE EVERYWHERE!

- Starting in Idaho Falls, visit the Museum of Eastern Idaho, the Museum of Idaho, and the Artitorium, where kids can create their own art and music.
- Then head west to Hailey and for the Trailing of the Sheep Festival, which preserves the history of the families in Idaho sheep ranching and honors their contributions to the development of Idaho and the West.
- Continue west to Boise, where you can catch a performance of the Idaho Shakespeare Festival in the summer months, or the Boise Philharmonic, Opera Idaho, or Ballet Idaho during the other three seasons.
- Continue northwest to the town of Weiser, Idaho for the National Oldtime Fiddler’s Contest, an event that doubles the population of Washington County.
- Travel north to Moscow (home of the University of Idaho) for the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival and the Pritchard Art Gallery.
- And finally, up in the northern panhandle of the state, you can attend the Festival at Sandpoint.

To View the Top 10 Reasons to Support the Arts, Click Here.

IDAHO ARTS NEED YOU!

JOIN THE ARTS ACTION FUND FOR FREE TODAY!

E-MAIL US: ArtsActionFund@artsusa.org
VISIT US: ArtsActionFund.org/join
CALL US: 202.371.2830 x2067
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