Dear Honorable Mayor Breed and President Walton:

On behalf of local arts and culture organizations, artists, and arts workers, we are writing to express our gratitude for approving critical backfill funding last year to continue supporting artists and arts organization operations through the Hotel Tax. While recovery is moving ahead, it is still growing slowly as many of our arts venues experience decreased attendance and ticket sales. The Hotel Tax arts and culture allocation funding that allows the San Francisco Arts Commission and Grants for the Arts to supply grants to artists and organizations, Cultural Districts, Cultural Centers, and Arts Impact Endowment (AIE) is vital during this continued difficult time.

While we are almost a year from this generous budget announcement last year, we see that tourism and hotel occupancy is still significantly reduced compared to 2019. We understood the budget proposal last year and approval for backfill was to provide funds for the next two budget years (2021/22 & 2022/23). However, we are reaching out to request and ensure the proposed allocation for the next budget year passes as proposed at $31.4M, which includes a 10% increase from the previous year’s allocation.

We are thrilled to see the City, its leaders, residents, and visitors value and see the arts as an essential pillar of our great City and feel that arts and culture provide an essential element for a healthy society. We think these sentiments have been expressed broadly during the pandemic with several investments. And, we’ve seen firsthand how the arts have provided hope, resilience, reflection, and educational opportunities.

However, with the ongoing pandemic and slow movement in the tourism economy, we realize the tremendous base we have approved through Proposition E (2018) – the Hotel Tax will likely continue to struggle for many months. This funding stream provides crucial support to our smaller, mid-size and cultural organizations that rely on this funding.

We feel it is essential to uphold this funding and ask our City’s leaders to continue funding backfill to the Hotel Tax allocation for the arts for the coming year.

Once again, we thank you for your ongoing support and investment in our City’s arts and culture sector and thank you in advance for considering our request to uphold this commitment. Please let us know if we can provide more information or correspondence.

Humbly yours and in gratitude,
Arts for a Better Bay Area + San Francisco Arts Alliance and all signed organizations and individuals*

CC: Board of Supervisors, Ashley Groffenberger, Ralph Remington, Vallie Brown

* Please see a list of all supporting organizations and individuals on the following page.
List of Supporting Organizations and Arts/Culture Workers