



**HIPPODROME
THEATRE** *at the*
FRANCE-MERRICK
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill SB597-2022 (Income Tax -Theatrical Production Tax Credit)

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

I am in full support of the Theatrical Production Tax Credit, Senate Bill 597-2022. For decades both Networks Entertainment, in Columbia Maryland, and Troika Entertainment, in Rockville Maryland, have led the touring Broadway industry, sometimes producing up to 70% of all national touring Broadway shows each year. This is not only a cause for bragging rights, "Maryland is the home of National touring Broadway", but a chance to encourage these companies to conduct pre-tour activities, technical rehearsals, and premier show openings/performance first, in their home state of Maryland.

The program encourages the use of qualified state-wide entertainment venues, many of which the state already has a significant investments in, making them competitive with other venues located in the Northeast states that already offer similar tax incentives to musical and theatrical productions produced on Broadway. When this bill passes, Maryland won't have to compete to attract this additional business because Networks & Troika have both called Maryland home for over 25 years.

Mandated closures and public health efforts and the ongoing fear of contracting the coronavirus have left live entertainment with reduced revenue opportunity and no solid timeline of a return to business as usual. This large scale, long term shut down extended well into 2021. The Maryland Theatrical Tax Credit will give us a helping hand in getting the industry back on track by making up some of the union man hours we lost during the pandemic. Most of our full-time staff has just now been getting back to work, and hundreds of skilled union stagehands and theatre staff who make their living off of live entertainment are getting back to partial work after a 19 month forced hiatus. Passing the Maryland State Theatrical Tax Credit this session will help shorten our venues and large union skilled labor-force's long road to recovery.

Each production, under this incentive, would create 10,000+ union man hour s in a time of year that our venue s are traditionally vacant ; that's stagehands, musicians, and wardrobe/ hair union laborers now be working year round. In 2019 alone the Hippodrome Theatre generated over \$29.7 million dollars in economic impact to the state of Maryland. When Blockbusters like HAMILTON & THE LION KING sell-out in Maryland, they alone bring an additional \$19 million each in economic impact over their four performance weeks.

Please support this crucial bill, especially during these difficult times, and in doing so support Maryland's economy, union workers, and the two amazing Broadway Touring producing companies in our state.

With appreciation,

Ron Legler
President
France-Merrick Performing Arts Center