

June 12th 2020

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Executive Office of the Mayor  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington DC 20004

CC: The DC Council Committee on the Whole, Chairman Phil Mendelson, Councilmember Kenyon McDuffie, Councilmember Charles Allen, Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Councilmember David Grosso, Councilmember Anita Bonds, Councilmember Brandon Todd, Councilmember Robert White, Councilmember Mary Cheh, Councilmember Trayon White, Councilmember Elissa Silverman, Councilmember Vincent Gray, Director Shawn Townsend, Deputy Mayor John Falcicchio, Director Andrew Trueblood, Director Heran Sereke-Brhan, Director Angie Gates and Director Maryann Lombardi

Requesting Funding Support for Music Festival Organizers Post COVID

Dear Mayor Bowser and DC Council,

DC's music festival and cultural celebrations are in grave danger of extinction in a post COVID world if the city does not take any action to secure their long term survival. This virus has not only caused the cancelation of almost every festival in 2020, but, has caused large financial losses due to sunk costs, loss in future revenue due to capacity restrictions, supply chain disruptions, permanent loss of vendors, higher priced new partnerships, and incredible additional costs that will be attributed to public safety compliance for years to come.

Over the past couple of weeks, members of the DC music festival community have come together to consolidate data on the economic and community impact of our festivals. We sent out a survey and collected data from 16 of DC's largest music festivals: Broccoli City Festival, DC Jazz Festival, Funk Parade, National Cannabis Festival, All Things Go Fall Classic, Adams Morgan Day, Porch Fest DC, Black LUV Festival, Hill Fest DC, Capital Fringe Festival, Snallygaster, Trillectro, The Black Love Experience, Kingman Island Bluegrass & Folk Festival, Honey Groove Festival, Washington Women in Jazz Festival and Down in the Reeds Festival. The survey aggregates data about the number of attendees, accommodations, transportation, non-profit and charity support, number of local hires and dollars spent by attendees.

The organizations who have signed on below host events that are attended by over 300,000 DMV residents yearly, and regularly draw close to 70,000 yearly attendees from outside the DMV. These festivals have donated or provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to DC based non-profits or local charities, they've grossed over \$14 million annually for locally owned businesses, artists, craft and food vendors. Our guests have booked more than 20,000 night stays in hotels or Airbnbs per year and hundreds of thousands are spent on metro and rideshare services to attend these events. These combined festivals pay a minimum \$130,000 a

year to MPD and nearly double that in private security costs. Our festivals pay over 2000 local employees \$1.4 million dollars just for day of operations and that does not include the artists and performers who are all paid as well. These are just rough numbers but they suggest significant economic impact for the city, and therefore these festivals deserve a set aside in the 2021 budget as well as budgets for the next 5 years. We are happy to share this data privately with any official or agency who would like to review.

We are asking for a dedicated music festival set aside in the amount of \$15,000,000 over the course of the next 5 years. This funding should be separate from any funds or grants non profit organizers have regularly received in the past. A number of the festivals listed have never received any funding from the city. Every festival will be dealing with lower attendance and revenue for years at least until there is a viable vaccine. Every responsible festival producer will also have significant added and sunk costs due to capacity restrictions, social distancing guidelines, requirements for additional security and PPE for all attendees and staff. We believe given the importance of these cultural events that sustain our local music and arts community, this type of rainy day fund will be a drop in the bucket and can secure the continued growth of the District of Columbia towards being a nationally recognized Music City.

Thank you for your time, we look forward to following up.

Broccoli City Festival  
DC Jazz Festival  
Funk Parade  
National Cannabis Festival  
All Things Go Fall Classic  
Adams Morgan Day  
PorchFest DC  
Black LUV Festival  
Hill Fest DC  
Capital Fringe Festival  
Snallygaster  
Trillectro  
Kingman Island Bluegrass & Folk Festival  
Down in the Reeds Festival  
The Black Love Experience  
Honey Groove Festival  
Washington Women in Jazz Festival