



ALLIANCE OF ARTISTS COMMUNITIES

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Deborah Obalil
Executive Director

March 13, 2007

Dear Member of Congress,

The Alliance of Artists Communities is pleased to be a National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2007. As the professional organization for artists' communities, colonies and residency programs across the United States, the Alliance operates on the premise that the future of American culture depends on supporting creativity and a broad diversity of artists. Artists' communities provide artists and other creative thinkers a much-needed opportunity to reevaluate their public role and refresh their creative process, often toward the creation of work that goes on to have lasting public impact.

On behalf of our member organizations and the over 12,000 artists they serve annually, we urge you to support increased funding for our nation's cultural agencies: the National Endowment for the Arts; the National Endowment for the Humanities; and the Office of Museum Services. The core funding programs of these cultural agencies are critical to nurturing the growth and artistic excellence of thousands of organizations and artists in every corner of the country.

Additionally, many artists' communities include cultural exchange as a core part of their missions. Exchange among artists from different cultures and backgrounds, as well connection of foreign guest artists to other community members, is an important aspect of the vitality of American culture. The need for international connections on a people-to-people basis toward greater diplomacy is more important now than ever. For these reasons **we strongly ask that you support improving the visa process for foreign guest artists at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.**

Lastly, **we ask that you support tax policy that continues the great American tradition of philanthropy for non-profit organizations.** Enhanced tax deductibility for charitable gifts supports America's non-profit arts organizations and encourages individual citizens to participate more actively in the organizations impacting their communities. We also ask that you support efforts to declare artists, writers and composers equal citizens by allowing them to take a fair-market value deduction for contributions of their own works to arts organizations.

Again, the Alliance of Artists Communities urges you to support increased funding for our nation's cultural agencies and policies that will strengthen arts organizations and artists. Through these measures we as a nation will maintain our position as a global cultural leader and build a lasting legacy for the next generation.

Sincerely,

Deborah Obalil
Executive Director