Dear [ARTS ADMINISTRATOR NAME HERE]:

We are writing to you as a growing movement, a group of artists, performers and independent curators organizing to obtain fees for the labor we provide to art institutions. W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) evolves from a long history of activism and advocacy on behalf of arts and cultural workers.

We provide a labor force. It is socially acknowledged that payment is granted for services rendered. Art institutions enforce a system of organized irresponsibility, wherein we are asked to provide services in exchange for “exposure”. Cultural workers not only contribute to the health, education and growth of our local communities, but also to the economy-at-large through the businesses, landlords and individuals we financially support through our art-making practices. Institutional staff members, advisors, trustees and board members are part of our community and must serve as our advocates, rather than our adversaries, in maintaining an arts community. As artists, performers and independent curators, we can no longer afford to be factored out of our own equation.

We are your conduit to the public, your livelihood. Your salaried jobs are dependent on our labor and works, as well as our acquiescence and cooperation. W.A.G.E. demands transparency: base fee and honoraria schedules must be implemented by art institutions as a matter of policy for cultural workers whose services and/or works are requested for presentation. This effort corresponds logically and fairly with the economic system we’re participating in.

It’s time to stop the systematic exploitation of artists, performers and independent curators. There is now a window of opportunity to reconsider and restructure the system that has failed us. In good economic times or bad, things have remained the same. We demand a system that supports both the artist AND art institution. We can, and must, survive through a conscious and active exchange of support mechanisms and advocacy that INCLUDES the artist in the equation. Together we must set new standards.

W.A.G.E. hopes to engage directly with YOU - the art institution - so that these pertinent issues can be discussed. We must establish a relationship based on mutual respect, through an embrace of economic realism and responsibility. We would like to begin a dialogue, and ask for your participation and input in order to negotiate on behalf of our community.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME(S) HERE]

W.A.G.E.