

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown  
Governor of Oregon  
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

As representatives of Oregon's business community, we applaud your efforts to begin the process of re-opening Oregon's economy and putting people back to work.

We realize this process will take time, and it will be complex. While the immediate focus is on allowing closed sectors to re-open, we must also think ahead to the more daunting task of restoring and rebuilding our state's economy in light of the unavoidable permanent damage it is sustaining in this remarkably difficult period.

As we have said before, we urge you to engage business more robustly in your near-term and longer-term deliberations about re-opening and rebuilding Oregon's economy. Specifically, we suggest you:

- Immediately convene a panel of business leaders to advise you on a strategy for restoring and rebuilding Oregon's economy, and to advise your medical panel on the economic impacts of re-opening tactics.
- In the interim as you issue re-opening guides, ensure that your medical experts talk directly with practitioners in impacted industries prior to their finalization and release.
- Develop an economic recovery package for consideration by the Legislature with input from a broad cross section of Oregon industries, that strategically focuses on long-term job recovery.

Oregon's business community agrees with your strong position that health and science must be the primary determinants for how and when Oregon will re-open. At the same time, we must immediately begin the process of economic restoration, and determine what it will take to bring back the 360,000 jobs lost so far in this crisis. As you know, the vast majority of those lost jobs come from the private sector. In our view, it goes without saying that private sector leaders are best positioned to give you advice about how to restore those jobs, rebuild our economy and put Oregonians back to work.

The process you have set for re-opening the economy calls for small work groups representative of the most impacted sectors. We appreciate that effort, but what we have found is that the groups' actual ability to engage is limited, and recommendations are moving forward without robust input from the industries most impacted. It appears the final arbiters will be your panel of medical experts, who appear charged not only with determining the medical conditions necessary for a re-opening but also the operating requirements of businesses subject to the orders. We certainly don't doubt their expertise or argue with their focus on public health, but we also believe they would benefit from direct business input about the real-world feasibility of the suggested operating conditions.

Additionally, these tactical discussions about re-opening certain types of closed businesses, while clearly important, fall short of the bigger, strategic discussion about how we will restore and rebuild Oregon's economy. We know that many businesses simply will not be able to recover from the devastating economic blow they have taken over the last eight weeks. We already are seeing news

reports of some that are closing permanently. Others will reduce operations. And many with global supply chains and customers are likely not to return to normal operations until there is a worldwide recovery from this pandemic. This all translates to lost jobs – and lost family incomes – for thousands of Oregonians.

We hope you will consider the proposals we have outlined above. We are prepared to work closely with you on this effort.

Governor, Oregon’s experience with the coronavirus pandemic has been much more moderate than what we have seen in neighboring states, and that is due directly to the bold steps you took early in the crisis. We urge you to continue to be bold as we move forward to recover from the economic damage this crisis has caused and restore the financial well being of hundreds of thousands of Oregon families.

Thank you.





Salem Area Chamber  
of Commerce