



WASHINGTON COUNTY OREGON

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

March 18, 2020

To the Honorable Governor Kate Brown,

We write you today on behalf of Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah Counties, our staff, and our residents.

We come to you concerned that many of our residents are about to experience direct economic impacts related to the spread of COVID-19. We want to address two critical issues related to housing: a request for a statewide moratorium on evictions and issues surrounding the acceptance of hotel/motel vouchers.

Moratorium on Evictions

On March 11, 2020, Oregon Governor Kate Brown announced the closure of all Oregon K-12 schools through the end of March. As of yesterday, March 17 those closures were extended to April 28.

Additionally, on March 16 the announcement came that dine-in restaurants and bars were barred from serving guests which has led to the closure of those unable to provide take-out or curbside service. Add to that the hundreds of concerts, plays, professional sporting events, trade shows, and other events have been postponed or cancelled, and the result is workers throughout the tri-county being hard hit.

School closures will result in hourly workers with school age children who are unable to afford childcare having to stay home, while others have been or will be laid off due to the shrinking hospitality, entertainment, and retail industries. All of this will result in lost wages, and possibly lost jobs, for many of our hourly workers.

It is critical that our region does not add to the creation of additional economic and public health emergencies that could result from the impact of potential evictions and homelessness.

And so, Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah Counties request that Governor Brown enacts a temporary moratorium on economic evictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed eviction moratorium should be focused on all economic evictions related to residents who are affected by COVID-19 and cannot pay their rent. The moratorium should prevent any resident from being evicted due to financial impact related to a business closure, loss of hours or wages, layoffs, or out-of-pocket medical costs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial impacts should be defined as “a substantial loss of household income due to business closure, loss of compensable hours of work or wages, layoffs, or extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses”.

We propose that tenants still have the liability for unpaid rent which landlords may seek, and tenants must pay within a six-months after expiration of the emergency moratorium. It is critical that no late fees be charged or

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collected for rent that is delayed for the reasons stated in this moratorium. Landlords may not seek rent that is delayed for any reasons stated during moratorium.

Hotel/Motel Vouchers

We also want to share our concern about the health and safety of our homeless population without access to shelter.

One initiative being implemented throughout our region is to place at risk homeless individuals into hotels and or motels in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 in shelters. Multnomah County reported just last week that some hotels and motels in their jurisdiction were not accepting homeless individuals, going as far as kicking them out.

We therefore request that Governor Brown declares that any place of lodging within the state must accept and/or retain housing any individual whose payment is subsidized either by a County or a County contractor.

We further ask that the refusal to accept or retain housing of individuals whose payment is subsidized either by a County or a County contractor during the declarations of emergency will be subject to fines and penalties to the greatest extent possible

Utilizing hotels and motels is an important step in quarantining potentially infected individuals who could transmit COVID 19 to an extremely vulnerable population.

We understand these are uncertain times, with new information being surfaced daily. Our primary concern is to ensure we as Counties have the tools we need to respond to this crisis on the local level.

We will continue to work with our local partners on these issues, as well as with counties from across the state as we work to mobilize our resources to those most in need. Your help in providing these additional tools are greatly appreciated.

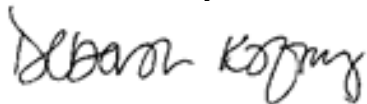
Sincerely,



Kathryn Harrington, Chair
Washington County Board of Commissioners



Jim Bernard, Chair
Clackamas County Board of Commissioners



Deborah Kafoury, Chair
Multnomah County Board of Commissioners

