



Honorable Senator Arnie Roblan, Co-Chair Interim Special Joint Committee on COVID Response
Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair Interim Special Joint Committee on COVID Response

The construction industry is critical to the state’s economy, and provides good paying, family wage jobs to many Oregonians. While considering responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, our coalition urges the state to take action to protect this sector of the economy so that it may continue to provide economic stability for individual workers and Oregon as a whole. In times of economic downturns, capital construction and the construction industry are often ways to grow and strengthen the economy. Since Oregon will soon be looking for ways to bolster its economy following this pandemic, it is critical that the state take steps to ensure that the construction industry can continue to operate through these difficult times.

We support the work of our business partners to identify business and worker challenges across all sectors. Ours is a safety sensitive industry, and our companies take measures on every jobsite throughout Oregon to ensure the safety of workers. As an industry, we are communicating on a daily basis with the latest information to ensure that construction sites are taking all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of our members in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic as we look to also protect the viability of the industry going forward.

Our local and national organizations also work tirelessly to ensure we provide safe, durable, and reliable structures for our citizens. We are offering our collective expertise and commitment to training, safety, and community engagement.

From our experience, construction delays impact current contracts with consumers and businesses, bank loans, worker availability and increase the backlog across the industry. Construction work can be impacted by weather or other physical factors that, depending on the project and location, could lead to a complete loss of progress for the construction season or damage to structures if we are unable to proceed when mother nature allows. We ask that you consider our needs and work with our coalition on common sense, real-time solutions, and support the leadership necessary to keep our economy moving forward.

- Construction in Oregon employs over 100,000 workers and represents 8.5 billion dollars in Oregon’s GDP.



- We need priority and emphasis by state and local governments to make sure regulatory processes proceed in a timely and efficient manner. State and local governments may need to deploy competent engineers/architects, third-party experts, use video or other technology to allow inspections and permitting processes to continue. The best way to support Oregon’s economy is to make sure work progresses by expediting plan review and inspection using creative emergency-based solutions.
- We need flexibility from state and local governments for our business and worker licenses. The COVID-19 emergency is a test of our resiliency in that if this was a catastrophic natural disaster, steps would be taken to implement flexibility for renewal dates, training, continuing education, and other procedural requirements for obtaining and maintaining professional licensure.
- We ask that any new rules, codes or ordinances related to development be placed on hold during this emergency so that government and businesses can focus on completing those projects in-process.
- We need flexibility to accept electronic signatures (instead of in-person signatures), process paperwork electronically, and keep timelines open while we navigate this crisis.
- We ask that state and local governments use an “all hands-on deck” approach to making sure we keep projects moving forward this construction year before weather becomes an obstacle. We encourage the use of electronic systems for permitting, plans review and inspections, and we are willing work with our local and state partners to address questions of safety.
- We ask that contractors and workers in Oregon who are in good standing receive “safe harbor” during this crisis for non-life safety procedural errors related to building and land use processes, and that state and local communities exercise maximum, fact-based discretion understanding that all of us are in this together.
- We ask that our citizen volunteering boards, commissioners and councils be used as business sector think tanks for state and local government. We ask that the institutional knowledge that exists through our boards, commissioners, and councils remain in place and that members are allowed to meet (electronically) as a means to provide feedback.
- We ask that those areas where we need legislative relief or recognition for actions taken be considered when the legislature meets again. We are also a resource for long-term solutions.
- Finally, we ask that you support a proclamation recognizing the value of construction in our economy and encouraging all state and local agencies involved in this essential work to take the steps necessary to keep Oregon working in this time of crisis.

We are thankful for the leadership of the Governor and the legislature during this time of crisis.

