

AOC ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES

March 18, 2020

Dear Co-Chairs Roblan and Holvey, and Members of the
Joint Special Committee On Coronavirus Response,

As you know, Oregon's counties are on the front lines fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, taking actions to help protect our public health and safety during this challenging time.

Oregon's counties have been assessing and identifying additional needs that we have as a result of this battle and the protective measures we are taking as a statewide community.

Many of those needs are, of course, financial, and include critical areas such as public health, behavioral health, public safety, sheltering and services for houseless persons, financial and other support for those that are quarantined, and financial assistance for employees and small businesses, to name just a few. In addition, we need to ensure the quick and efficient distribution of targeted federal dollars with the least amount of state red tape or delay.

Furthermore, there is also a need to pass substantive legislation. As you know, the key to fighting this pandemic at the present time is social distancing to flatten the curve. However, some of our laws are designed to specifically encourage or enable social interaction, the opposite of our current need. As a result, we may seek some temporary amendments to existing Oregon laws to make them work better under our current situation. Examples might include laws that deal with deadlines and processes associated with public hearings, public budgeting, and elections. In short, we need to temporarily shift to those processes and deadlines in a manner that facilitates and encourages means of communication that are not in-person.

Along with our other governmental partners, AOC plans to soon bring the Committee specific legislative proposals for your consideration to assist our community in these challenging times. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and please stay safe.

Sincerely,



Rob Bovett
Legal Counsel and Interim Legislative Director
Association of Oregon Counties (AOC)

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