



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: March 17, 2020
TO: Joint Special Committee on Corona Virus Response
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: Recommendations for elements of Legislative response package

Dear Co-Chair Holvey, Co-Chair Roblan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for serving on this Committee during these challenging times, and for encouraging Oregonians to submit ideas for how we mitigate the economic and social impacts

Lane County offers the following suggestions to the Special Committee as you contemplate a legislative response to the Coronavirus, with a particular focus on helping the business community and of course, their employees:

Unfinished 19-21 budget allocations from the 2020 short session

- Include \$45M for homelessness assistance, including direct appropriations to the community projects identified in HB 4001.
- Include \$25M for remainder of this biennium for Community Corrections Act funding. Approximately twelve percent of these funds are spent for community based providers who operate inside Lane County.
- Include \$9M for community mental health services (county financial assistance agreement). Approximately seventy five percent of these funds are spent for community based providers who operate inside Lane County. During this pandemic, our services for mental health consulting is highly elevated.
- Include \$15.3M for continued Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, leveraging \$63M in federal funding. This model in particular within Lane County frees up necessary hospital beds.
- Provide bonding authority for projects within Lane County; University of Oregon Huestis Hall (\$51.5M), City of Eugene Riverfront Development (\$4.3M), University of Oregon Shake Alert (\$7.5M), and Oregon 21 (\$5M).
- Include \$798K for three additional morgue technicians within the Chief Medical Examiner's Office (OSP). Morgue capacity in Lane County has long been an issue and we are fortunate to have a partnership with PeaceHealth in this regard, but adequate staffing is a continual challenge.

Administrative functions requiring adjustments in these times

- Maximize flexibility for existing revenue and capital, for example use of urban renewal funding and transient lodging tax revenue.
- Temporarily waive statutorily required timelines for land use procedures under Oregon law (ORS 215.247)
- Temporarily waive in person license renewal for older Oregonians.
- Allow counties, at their discretion, to temporarily waive or reduce property tax payments and/or eliminate or reduce late filing fees due to COVID-19 impacts.

Oregon Policy

- Convene a special task force under direction of Oregon Business Development Department to rapidly bring to market personal protective equipment (or other devices aimed at flattening the curve) manufactured in Oregon.
- Direct Oregon Health Authority to supervise an employee housed in the office of the Governor a pandemic analyst, able to interface with other states and federal offices on global disease outbreaks and ascertain potential threats to Oregon.

Federal Policy

- Small business is so key to Oregon's economy and business owners are typically independent contractors who are left out of the unemployment benefit framework. We urge the Legislature to elevate this issue to its' federal advocacy toolkit, that is, via the Governor's lobbyist or the National Council of State Governments.

Other

- Extend bonding authority for Lane County and Clackamas County Courthouses through 2023 due to impacts on these counties from COVID 19 pandemic.
- Allocate additional funding for public health modernization for remainder of 19-21 biennium.

In closing, the above recommendations likely only scratch the surface of issues local government is facing. Our leadership staff meets daily and each day more issues arise in terms of how to effectively respond to this crisis. I was encouraged to see your Committee will continue to convene and to receive input from across Oregon.

--AC

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