

Good afternoon,

Thank you for taking up the task of helping Oregonians through what will surely be a challenging time. I appreciate the work that you are doing.

My name is Corey Schuster. I have a small winery located in Portland, called Jackalope Wine Cellars. I am writing to give you my concerns about upcoming hardships, and any potential financial assistance the State may offer.

I am a company of one, but use temporary labor throughout the year to help with tasks greater than one person can handle. Through my business, I support multiple winery supply stores, farmers (grape growers), warehouses, distribution companies, and many other businesses that help me to make wine and then go out and sell it.

Of my many concerns, I am worried about a drastic reduction in sales/income due to restaurants and bars closing, and people social distancing themselves while also being rightly concerned about income. Further, because I use distribution companies to sell my wine in Oregon and a handful of other States, I am worried that the current climate will leave them unable to pay me for wine they already have in their possession; money that I have been counting on to help pay my outstanding bills.

Because I am a sole ownership LLC, and am not technically an employee of the company, I have no option to file for unemployment if my sales are drastically reduced. While my operating costs are minimal right now, I still have rent (that I pay to the winery in which I make my wine), I have payments to make to grape growers, I have payments to make on bottles, corks, and labels, lines of credit, credit cards, and other loans. Not to mention rent on my apartment, food, insurance, etc.

What I would love to see, is something like a grant program for business owners to help us cover costs and stay afloat until things change. Something akin to unemployment, but for business owners. A package that would leave me/us in a position to hit the ground running when things turn around to get back up to speed. I know pathways to loans are being cleared, but honestly, taking on more loans is not a route I want to go down. That may get me through this time, but leaves me in a deeper hole.

I worry that I will be left unable to keep my financial commitments and pay people that I depend on. Which will leave them in a harder position to meet their commitments. And I worry about covering my personal bills and needs as well.

My hope is that the State will keep us small business owners in mind when crafting any support bills. That you will all keep in mind the number of people in the food/beverage industry that will be hurting quite badly.

Thank you for your time, and your efforts.

Best,

Corey Schuster

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Corey Schuster

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