

From: [Chris Dennett](#)
To: [Exhibits JSCVR](#)
Subject: Coronavirus relief for business - From The Tofurky Company (Hood River, OR)
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 10:00:46 AM

Dear Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response,

As a food manufacturer in Hood River, Oregon and an employer of 200 people, we would like to thank you for your quick response to the coronavirus public health crisis. As you know, this pandemic is devastating to employees around Oregon and to small companies like us. We want to protect both our employees and our business, and are doing all we can to maintain operations while still conforming to COVID-19 health guidelines. The response of the Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response will be crucial to the health and safety of our employees and to our business's longer-term viability. The Tofurky Company asks that you consider our following three requests as you consider how to provide relief to Oregon workers and businesses.

1. **Defining essential businesses:** As a food manufacturer, Tofurky plays a critical role in helping maintain the domestic food supply, helping keep retail store shelves stocked while people are preparing their meals at home as restaurants close their doors. If a shelter in place order were to be issued, we request that food and beverage manufacturers like Tofurky be defined as an "essential business" and be allowed to conduct business as usual, as long as health department recommendations for limiting viral spread can be maintained. We further ask that the rest of the food system supply chain, including ingredient and packaging suppliers, freight operators, and food distributors also be granted "essential business" status.
2. **Employee Assistance while at home to the coronavirus:** As employees are forced to stay home for several reasons due to COVID-19, from self-quarantine to a shelter in place order or from school closures, it becomes increasingly difficult for small employers like Tofurky to maintain paid sick time beyond 40 hours. As an employer who cares about our workforce, our ability to hire new employees, and our long-term business viability, we request that the state approve measures to economically support employees in a way that allows them to remain employed at their current company and remain on their current health insurance benefits while not at work.
3. **Employer reimbursement for extended OFMLA:** If any state legislation or executive order requires employers to pay for extended OFMLA benefits so employees can remain home to self-quarantine, shelter in place or due to school closures as a result of COVID-19, Tofurky requests the state of Oregon reimburse employers for these paid benefits. These would be additional and unplanned expenses to employers like Tofurky, that will threaten long-term business viability and future jobs.

Thank you for reviewing our testimony during this trying time. Your actions are critical in not only helping to tackle this pandemic, but also to the health and safety of our employees and our ability to continue to create jobs into the future.

Sincerely,
Jaime Athos, CEO
Andy Kunkler, CFO
Chris Dennett, Director
The Tofurky Company,

602 Anchor Way
Hood River, OR 97031



CHRIS DENNETT, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND INTEGRATION

m: 503-504-3555

chris.dennett@tofurky.com | tofurky.com

