

Dear Co-Chairs Holvey,

As a business owner, I am writing today to share the impacts the current COVID-19 health crisis is having on my business, my employees and my family.

These are hard times for all of us. I encourage you to support our business community as we deal with the astonishing economic disruption that has accompanied this health crisis.

I co-own an independent bookstore in Ashland. We have a tourist economy here. That economy ground to a halt when the Governor restricted group assemblies to 250 people. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival summarily closed.

We are being asked to operate as a pickup and delivery business. We cannot sustain our business for long under these conditions. We have had to ask for rent relief and have laid off ALL of our employees. While we would like to do our part to flatten the curve, we cannot pay essential expenses like rent unless we keep our doors open. We do not qualify for unemployment as business owners. The situation is dire for all businesses in Ashland, but especially downtown where rents are high and the expected tourists are absent.

The timing of the restrictions is particularly impactful, as businesses just came out of the 3 month slow season.

I don't know how our business community will survive this . Please help.

Sincerely,

Lisa Afshar
419 Willow St
Ashland, OR 97520
alamidwife@yahoo.com