



May 15, 2020

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Dear Honorable Governor Brown, Honorable Senate President Courtney, Honorable Speaker Kotek and Members of the Oregon Emergency Board,

While we are glad to see a plan to allocate \$200 million of Oregon's share of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to local jurisdictions statewide, we are concerned about limiting the use of the funds beyond the already narrow set of allowable expenses laid out by the US Treasury.

Businesses of all sizes have been devastated by the necessary actions taken to close down the state during this coronavirus pandemic. The path to Oregon's recovery is two-fold; it will require managing the public health crisis as well as building back the economy. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed to tackle both pieces.

The US Treasury issued guidance on how that money could be spent, which includes "expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency."<sup>1</sup>

We are not aware of any state that has limited how local governments may use the money beyond that guidance.

We also note that Washington County indicates in its May 13<sup>th</sup> letter to the E-Board that it will allocate a portion of its \$104.8 million direct appropriation on business recovery efforts, including local grants.<sup>2</sup> We applaud Washington County's commitment to its small businesses.

Our question is why would this opportunity be denied to businesses in Oregon's other 34 counties that did not receive a direct federal allocation?

Local governments have been on the front lines of this crisis. Many have chosen to assist local businesses in need by providing direct financial support through loan and grant programs. Many more would like the opportunity to do the same, but don't have the financial capacity without these CRF funds or other outside funding.

Our small businesses are desperate to survive and these programs could have a big impact for a business on the brink. Please do not restrict the uses of the CRF funds and please allow them to be used as intended in accordance with the US Treasury guidelines.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "V. Mikkelsen".

Vonnie Mikkelsen  
OSSC Board Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JL Wilson".

JL Wilson  
Legislative Counsel

1: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/201911/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/221867>

2: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/201911/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/221871>