

**From:** [Spencer Pond](#)  
**To:** [Exhibits JSCVR](#)  
**Subject:** My Testimony/ Why We Need A Rent Freeze  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 17, 2020 4:45:06 PM

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To Whom this may concern,

Along with many other Americans, I work in the service and hospitality industry and have been temporarily laid off due to Covid-19. We need a freeze on rent immediately!

I am a queer, non-binary artist and I work two jobs at about 51 hours a week, and still struggle to make ends meet. Between rent, student loan payments (that I haven't been able to reapply for and IDR due to website difficulties), health insurance, seeing an out of pocket therapist, utilities, special cat food for my kitty Mudd, food for myself, and commuting costs, I haven't been able to start a savings and I'm concerned I won't even be able to afford rent the next few months.

Without the security of these jobs I'm not sure how I'll be able to make ends meet (I know this is something many of us are considering currently) as I gross 35K a year. What I actually net alongside my tips barely covers enough for me to set aside a hundred to two each a month let alone even begin to start a savings account. I live paycheck-to-paycheck. I practice art and photography in my free time requiring my tips to be channeled into it- I couldn't imagine living without art. Sure I could just read books, go to work, get the occasional drink with friends, come home and watch a show, but I need a reason to live and it's through art that I find that. So how am I to live without art, without friends, without my cat, without a roof over my head to recharge after my 6 day workweek? If I don't have income coming in then I can't afford to pay rent. I might be able to pay for April but how will I feed myself after? How will I pay for May if restaurants and bars are still shutdown? I am lucky, fortunate, and privileged in so many ways, but I'm not sure I'd be lucky enough to pay for \$1,500 for two months of rent or the additional payments I need to make for student loans, therapy, insurance, utilities, etc.

Please, now is a time of crisis and few in situations like mine will be able make ends meet the next two months. Oregon's food, beverage, and hospitality industry is relying on your help. so much of our support and ability to thrive is because we compassionately and relentlessly support one another. It's not just food and bev workers it's all lower income workers. If we're evicted or can't make ends meet, how will we ever be able to restore our beautiful industry? And, the other industries that make Oregon and safe and unique place to call home? We have a better chance of getting through this if you freeze our rent now and give aid to lower income folks in these uncertain times.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Spencer Pond