

June 22, 2020

Joint Interim Committee

Chairs Courtney and Koteck, vice-chairs Girod and Drazan and committee members:

We are asking for your support on an issue that is of dire importance to the health and safety of our citizens and to our fragile economy. Please make liability protections for Oregon's travel and hospitality businesses a priority for the Special Session.

Travel and hospitality workers have been one of the hardest hit groups impacted by the COVID pandemic. More than 51% of American travel industry workers have been unemployed at some point during the pandemic. A total of more than 8 million Americans.

As our economy reopens, hospitality employers are bringing back staff and inviting customers into their businesses. At great expense these employers are meeting the required state reopening guidelines, but no amount of spending and preparation can guarantee that an employee or guest won't become infected. This liability issue is top of mind for our employers and is keeping some employers from reopening. Our partner organizations are committed to following the guidelines set forth by the Oregon Health Authority and in doing so, they need your support in providing important limited liability protections.

The protection we are seeking would only be applicable to those entities who under the direction of this Governor, are following the best practices outlined by the Oregon Health Authority and her administration. It would not cover willful misconduct, gross negligence or any protections for entities not working to comply with established guidelines.

The travel and hospitality industry is resilient and will come back, however this climb will require years of hard work and sacrifice and our employers require special support to give them a fighting chance. We urge you to make liability protections for Oregon's travel and hospitality businesses a priority for the Special Session.

Sincerely,



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