



July 22, 2020

Co-Chairs Roblan and Meek and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in support of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) and the important mission they serve. This is a critical agency that both provides important public health protections while also fostering the economic health of Oregon's alcohol and hospitality sector through moderate, safe, and legal consumption of alcohol. The important work of the OLCC, including enforcement of Oregon's alcohol laws, needs to be adequately funded.

The Oregon Beer & Wine Distributors Association (OBWDA) is a trade association representing local independent beer and wine distributors. OBWDA provides leadership in promoting the local beer and wine industry in Oregon by protecting Oregon's three-tier system of alcohol distribution and trade practice laws, enforced by the OLCC.

The three-tier system was put in place to promote moderate consumption of alcohol, ensure a commercially level playing field, provide for effective tax collection, and preserve public safety by ensuring licensed alcohol sales. Under the system, distributors efficiently track product through the chain of custody while providing Oregonians with a safe and unprecedented choice of products in the marketplace.

Recent public opinion polling shows that the 76% of Oregon adults over age 21 drink alcohol in moderation and believe alcohol is a safe product. More than 75% of Oregonians report that they are concerned with the state of the economy and anything that would cause additional harm to the beer, wine, and hospitality sector.

The OLCC ensures that Oregon's alcohol laws facilitate an orderly, safe, and fair system, allowing for consumer choice and brand market access, while protecting public health and safety. The OLCC has done an exemplary job of balancing its complex mission. During COVID-19, the OLCC has worked diligently to respond to the changing needs of Oregon's critical alcohol sector, while taking into consideration the impact of policy on public health and safety. Please support the OLCC budget and ensure the agency is adequately funded as we navigate the new complex needs for consumers and business in the highly regulated alcohol markets.

Thank you,

-Danelle Romain & Mike Freese

OBWDA Executive Director and Legal Counsel



July 24, 2020

TO: Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Senator Arnie Roblan, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Meek, Co-Chair
Senator Bill Hansell
Senator James Manning, Jr.
Representative Paul Evans
Representative Gary Leif
Representative Bill Post
Representative Rachel Prusak

FROM: Greg Astley, Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA)

RE: Co-Chair Rebalance Plan for Agency Reductions

Co-Chairs and Committee Members,

You have the unenviable task of recommending cuts to state agencies at a time when many of those agencies are providing necessary services to Oregonians. As the statewide association representing the hospitality industry, we are keenly aware of the impact the COVID-19 virus has had on people in our state and the economic fallout because of our current circumstances.

Restaurants, bars, breweries and lodging properties have been among the hardest hit by the economic fallout caused by COVID-19. Restrictions on travel, gathering sizes, hours of operations and even the ability to serve customers in our establishments have all resulted in tremendous hardship and significant loss of revenue. This negative impact has disproportionately affected POC communities and small business operators.

Throughout this trying time, one state agency has stood out as being responsive, innovative and cooperative in helping our industry and its members survive. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) has worked with operators to help increase public safety by providing options for curbside pick-up of wine, beer and cider as well as streamlining the process for expanding seating to include outdoor areas at a time when every seat in every sit-down dining establishment matters more than ever. They have offered economic support by enabling licensees to suspend the Liquor Liability Insurance (LLI) without penalty when licensees are not open and selling alcohol.

They have also been one of the agencies making sure licensees are complying with the Governor's Executive Orders and helping enforce public safety.

I'm writing today to ask this committee not to cut the OLCC's budget at a time when their support and service is most needed. As income tax and lottery revenue have been dramatically reduced during this crisis, revenue from licensees and liquor sales will be critical to the state's budget as the previously third largest source of state income.

You have difficult decisions to make and no easy answers when making these choices. Preserving the OLCC's budget right now, however, will continue to help licensees stay afloat and keep staff employed so they can feed their families and help us all safely recover from this pandemic.

Greg Astley
Director of Government Affairs
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA)