

August 17, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown  
Senate President Peter Courtney  
Speaker of the House Tina Kotek  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Governor Brown, Speaker Kotek and President Courtney:

As leaders representing regions throughout the state we implore you to allocate more direct federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) dollars to our cities and counties statewide. Federal Treasury guidance is clear that while Congress made direct allocations to local governments over 500,000 in population, the state was entrusted with distributing to all other local jurisdictions “using as a benchmark the per capita allocation formula that governs payments to larger local governments.” As Treasury guidance explains, “This approach will ensure equitable treatment among local governments of all sizes.” The equitable share to be distributed to local governments that did not get direct payments was 45%, or just under \$625 million of the \$1.39 billion entrusted to the state for distribution.

Just \$400 million of that \$625 million was committed to local jurisdictions, and to date the Legislature has made only \$200 million available to local governments through a reimbursement model. By keeping a disproportionate amount of the funds, the state has created inadequate resource distribution with significant statewide inequities in the amount of aid provided to local governments to help their communities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, local governments receiving CRF dollars distributed through the state have received a share of less than 15% of those funds and the per capita amounts range widely across the state. As a result, most Oregonians will see less benefit from local programs to address the health and economic effects of the pandemic than what Treasury intended. Any CRF funds spent “on behalf” of local jurisdictions will only exacerbate these inequities.

The need in many jurisdictions far exceeds the resources allocated from the State of Oregon. A number of jurisdictions have already used their entire allocation; including Seaside, Brookings, Medford and Jefferson County. In other communities, programs local governments have been able to offer have been oversubscribed. As an example, the \$400,000 of economic assistance grants that Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County provided in early April were expended in less than 1 hour, with currently 193 additional businesses requesting \$4M in assistance that will go unmet. Local governments are working to address childcare, shelter, and economic needs of the community, as well as public health impacts of the pandemic, but they cannot do their part without additional CRF funds.

We urge you to rectify this situation by providing local governments with equitable allocations from the additional \$200 million that the state had previously promised for

local governments. This money should be allocated to local communities following the model that the legislative workgroup endorsed in their letter dated June 5.

Respectfully,



Sen. Lee Beyer



Sen. Fred Girod



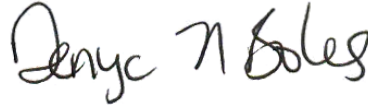
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Sen. Ginny Burdick



Sen. Denyc Boles



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Rep. Margaret Doherty



Sen. Mark Hass



Sen. Bill Hansell



Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis



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Sen. Betsy Johnson



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Rep. Gary Leif



Rep. Carla Piluso



Rep. Marty Wilde



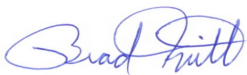
Sen. Kim Thatcher



Rep. Racquel Moore-Green



Rep. Greg Smith



Rep. Brad Witt



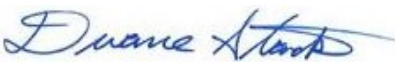
Rep. Cheri Helt



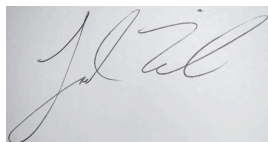
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Rep. Rachel Prusak



Rep. Duane Stark



Rep. Jack Zika



Rep. Bill Post



Sen. Lynn Findley



Rep. Chris Gorsek



Rep. Carl Wilson



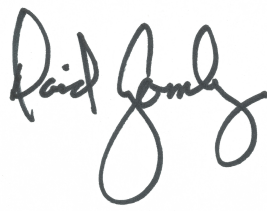
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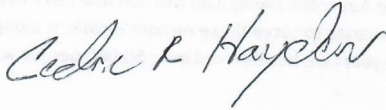
Rep. Ron Noble



Rep. Rick Lewis



Rep. Mark Owens



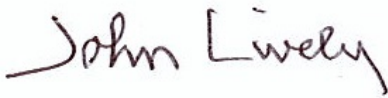
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Rep. Breese-Iverson



Sen. Chuck Thomsen



Rep. John Lively



Rep. Sherrie Sprenger