



Tigard Chamber of Commerce
12345 SW Main Street
Tigard, OR 97223
503-639-165

February 18, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and members of the committee,

We are writing today to express our support for SB 531.

The Tigard Chamber of Commerce represents over 270 members businesses (16,000+ jobs) who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community. We support entrepreneurs and the jobs they create.

This past year has been a difficult one for our business community. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in wide-spread changes to our daily lives, and ultimately, on our ability to do business.

With the onset of COVID-19, Governor Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, which shuttered many of our local businesses in the interest of protecting public health and slowing the spread of this virus. These closures resulted in many businesses suffering extensive losses. It meant laying off employees, losing inventory, losing customers, and for some, it meant losing their business entirely.

Tigard Bowl, a local bowling family owned bowling alley in business in Tigard for over 50 years, was shuttered for 6 months. The owners drained their savings paying the operating expenses on the facilities over that though idle over those 6 months had costs associated with them (equipment leases, utilities, mortgage, etc). Allowed to open for 3 weeks and then shuttered for another 3 months until recently, they are on the verge of having to sell the building, impacting their lives and livelihoods and those of their employees. This is one of our worst stories in our community.

Boutique gyms and small fitness facilities have also been impacted in our community. PPP and unemployment can help short term and primarily help employees, but nothing really helps cover ongoing operating costs such as leases, utilities, etc. Without normal revenue, taking on more debt isn't an answer, particularly if we want our economy to thrive as we come out of the pandemic.

When businesses are closed due to public health emergencies like COVID-19, it is important that the state help those businesses recover. Our local businesses are the life-blood of our community and our economy, especially our small and mid-sized businesses who have shouldered the greatest weight of these closures. We feel it is important for these businesses to be made whole. This is why we support SB 531.

SB 531 would allow businesses to be reimbursed for closures made during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses sacrificed their livelihoods in order to protect the health of Oregonians. In turn, we should help these businesses - and the jobs they provide - survive.

We hope you will stand with businesses in this state and support SB 531.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debi Mollahan", written in a cursive style.

Debi Mollahan
CEO, Tigard Chamber
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