

February 5, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and members of the committee,

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

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.

In my case, my business is my only source of income. I have worked hard to build a business that employees individuals and provides for their families as well as mine. It has been difficult to sustain a food services business during this pandemic. I have thought multiple times to close my business entirely as I see myself more and more in debt with trying to pay past due rent and utilities. It feels like closing my business would be the only option out of so much debt acquired this past year. As women, minority owned business, sustaining my business has not been easy as. We seek support for our small family owned food services business.

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,