March 22, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor of Oregon
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

As associations representing the breadth of Oregon’s business community, we strongly support your efforts to protect the health of Oregonians during the national crisis resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Our primary concern is with the health of all Oregonians, and Oregon employers are following your directives to take steps that will help stop the spread of this virus. We are also concerned about the economic crisis that has resulted from this pandemic, and we are focused on ensuring Oregon can maintain economic stability in the short term so Oregonians have jobs to return to in the longer term.

While we support your efforts to date, it is clear that additional bold steps must be taken immediately to stop the spread of coronavirus. Specifically, we urge you to:

1. Provide clarity to Oregonians – as local governments consider stay at home orders, we believe you must provide a single, statewide standard that gives certainty to Oregonians, including what steps are necessary and when they must be executed to protect the health of Oregonians.

2. Ensure our economy continues to function - any statewide order must include a statewide list of employees exempt from the order who work for essential businesses to ensure Oregonians will continue to receive critical services, and business functions essential to our economy can continue, so long as appropriate social distancing practices are adopted and remote working is encouraged where possible. We encourage you to follow the lead of other states, adopting the federal critical infrastructure guidance with additions that address the specific needs of Oregonians. We have provided your staff with a short list of Oregon-specific business functions that we believe should be recognized as critical along with the federal guidance.

3. Require statewide application - using your emergency powers, we believe any executive order must pre-empt local government from adopting an ordinance that impacts the provision of essential business functions as defined by the state of Oregon. Oregonians need certainty during this time of crisis. The only way to provide certainty is to have a single, statewide standard for any stay at home order.

Governor Brown, we appreciate the bold steps you have taken to address this crisis. Your leadership is essential to ensuring that Oregonians remain healthy and our businesses continue to function to provide products and services Oregonians need. We are committed to working with you in the weeks ahead.