

May 5, 2020

Dear Governor Brown:

Thank you very much for your leadership during the current COVID19 pandemic—these have been very challenging times across the state and the nation, and we are pleased at the positive results achieved by Oregonians working together to flatten the curve.

During the last weeks we have spent significant time reviewing your draft Roadmap for Reopening Oregon, and appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. After review, we are asking that in your Roadmap you grant some flexibility and authority to local governments to grant exceptions within their jurisdictions.

While we value the benefit of having a statewide strategy in terms of providing clarity for employers and the public, and in preventing confusion that could result from disparate rules or expectations, we also believe there may be some limited instances where a local government should have the flexibility to review specific situations on a case by case basis and grant some exceptions. This would be based on data and a weighing of risks, and frankly could go either way: some situations might warrant an exception from a state guidance, and others might warrant additional tightening of restrictions (such as in the event of a localized outbreak).

In Lane County, we have a strong commitment to using data and public health science to inform our policy decisions. We appreciate your efforts to use this lens to craft a phased-in approach to reopening businesses and relaxing the physical distancing measures that were necessary to slow the spread of disease. We are eager to reopen Lane County, and to do it in a way that provides protections for people from a second wave of the disease, and puts clear markers in place for early detection if the reopening process needs to be slowed or reversed at some point in the future. As part of our local planning process, we have crafted our own Blueprint for Opening Lane County, incorporating your plan for gating criteria and a phased approach to reopening. Our plan leans heavily on guidance from state health experts about specific precautions for each sector, and for employers and the community in general as they come back.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather Buch, Board Chair  
Lane County Commissioners