



May 15, 2020

Office of Governor Kate Brown  
Attn: Leah Horner, Regional Solutions and Jobs and Economy Director  
254 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Leah,

Oregon's lodging industry continues to reel from the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. This past week, Governor Brown announced the prohibition of large gatherings through the end of September. As a result, we are seeking clarity so we can do our best to plan for changes in travel demand over the coming months.

Local governments in many ways are direct partners of lodging establishments across Oregon. There is a direct correlation between the detrimental economic impacts felt by the lodging sector and the loss of revenue relied upon in normal times for cities and counties to balance their fiscal year budgets. Given the cascading impact on both the public and private sectors, the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA) is asking for additional clarity and would greatly appreciate guidance on the following travel related topics.

#### **Governor's Office Communication Specific to Leisure Travel**

Although no statewide order exists banning the operation of lodging facilities, it remains unclear what path lies ahead for responsible leisure travel amongst Oregonians. The following areas of communication focus would be incredibly helpful in preparing our workforce and facilities for steady increases in demand as consumer confidence shifts in the months ahead.

- A statewide approach to day use activities would provide consistency and clarity for Oregonians. Currently, Oregon day use activities are open in some locations but not in others. Regardless of location, our state's public spaces could be embraced with a stringent commitment on behalf of all Oregonians to maintain physical distancing between associated parties in all situations.
- Oregon families will need guidance from the Governor's office on what responsible leisure travel looks like as we gear up for the summer months ahead. Our industry has officially endorsed the American Hotel & Lodging Association's "Safe Stay" initiative which establishes heightened safety guidelines for all hosts and guests in Oregon. We will also launch comprehensive "Commitment to Safety" checklists for both restaurant and lodging operations next week.
- We acknowledge the ongoing concerns of residents living in leisure travel destination points around the state. It is incumbent upon all of us as Oregonians to make sure physical distancing between associated parties, regardless of location or residency, is embraced as a societal responsibility.

#### **Creating a Path for Meeting Room Usage outside of "Large Venue" designations**

Lodging operators throughout the state are working to implement appropriate physical distancing

procedures within their meeting spaces to bring some business back online at a time of desperate need.

Statewide affirmation from the Governor's office confirming the use of meeting spaces in line with approved Oregon Health Authority "Employer Guidance" procedures and limitations on gathering size would provide much needed clarity for operators.

In April, 88% of lodging operations saw at least a 50% decrease in revenue and half of all tourism related businesses (accommodations, restaurants & bars, entertainment & recreation, and parts of other industries) saw a combined 90% decrease in revenue.

While 33% of Oregon jobs can be done remotely, only 7% of lodging sector jobs have this luxury. We stand ready to assist with increased levels of communication in partnership with the Governor's Office, Travel Oregon, local governments, Destination Marketing and Management Organizations, and Chambers of Commerce throughout the state.

Together we can accomplish a great deal in providing uniform communication for Oregonians seeking safety and guidance as they embrace a new normal focused on societal responsibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Brandt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jason Brandt  
President & CEO  
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association