



July 22, 2020

TO: Mayor Sally Russell, Mayor Pro Tem Bruce Abernethy, Councilor Barb Campbell, Councilor Gena Goodman Campbell, Councilor Justin Livingston, Councilor Bill Moseley, Councilor Chris Piper

FROM: Undersigned Restaurant and Lodging Operations in Bend

RE: Travel Ban Advisory for Bend

Mayor Russell and Councilors,

While states like Texas and Florida are grappling with overwhelmed emergency departments and exponentially increasing case counts, Oregon's COVID-related hospital utilization rate sits at a low 4.4% and daily infections appear to have flattened.

We recognize the importance of keeping people safe during this unprecedented time and as an industry, we not only have a strong history of cleanliness and safety during "normal" times but we have stepped up our expectations and our procedures for keeping people safe and healthy right now.

At the national level, organizations like the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the National Restaurant Association have issued Guest Safety Checklists and Restaurant Reopening Guides respectively, documents detailing how to open back up with our guests' and employees' safety and well-being first and foremost in mind.

At the state level, the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association has also created a Commitment to Safety Checklist for lodging properties and restaurants also designed to go above and beyond the state and local guidelines for cleanliness and safety.

The hospitality industry undergoes some of the highest scrutiny when it comes to healthy working environments, food safety and cleanliness with regular inspections by county health departments and state agencies. As operators, our businesses and our employees depend on guests feeling comfortable enough to not only visit us the first time but return again and again to our establishments.

Asking visitors to stay away right now will have potentially devastating results for our businesses and our employees. We rely on visitor traffic to be able to keep people employed and help them provide for their families. With federal unemployment dollars ending July 31st, many people will be looking to come back to work just to put food on the table and we want to be able to help them do that. We live here too and are a part of this community. We want to keep people safe and we want them to be able to provide for their families.

We are not advocating for an ad campaign to encourage visitors to come to the Bend area right now. In fact, we applaud the efforts of Visit Bend to communicate and encourage visitors to be safe, wear masks and follow state and local guidelines around COVID-19. We know people will still want to come to our community right now and we want them to be safe for our sakes' as well as theirs.

We want to work with you to ensure the safety and well-being of residents and visitors. We hope you will review the checklists included with this letter showing our commitment and re-consider the travel ban advisory. Trying to ban visitor travel at a time when the hospitality industry is still struggling to survive will dramatically and negatively alter our community for years to come.

There is general concern being expressed in the community and several Bend restaurant and lodging businesses have asked the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association to coordinate communication on this issue. The organizations listed below are the first to sign on to this letter in a short period of time. We appreciate your review of our industry concerns.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Brandt
President & CEO, Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association

Alpenglow Vacation Rentals, Inc.

Arrived, LLC

Aspen Development Corporation

Barrio

Bend Burger Company

Bend Quality Inn

Best Western Premier Peppertree

Currents at the Riverhouse

DoubleTree by Hilton Bend

Entrada Lodge, Inc. , LBV, LLC and EFV, LLC

Greg's Grill on the Deschutes, LLC

McDonald's (4 select locations in Bend)

McMenamins

Mt. Bachelor LLC

Old Bend Lofts

Oxford Hotel / 10Below Restaurant

Pine Ridge Inn

Pour House Grill

Pronghorn Resort

**Red Robin of Bend / Restaurant Development
Company of Bend**

Residence Inn Bend

Riverhouse on the Deschutes

SpringHill Suites by Marriott Bend

Taco Del Mar Central Oregon

The Blacksmith Restaurant

Tumalo Feed Co. Steakhouse

Vesta Hospitality

Wall Street Suites

Widgi Creek Golf Club