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Governor Kate Brown Launches July 4th Face Covering Enforcement Statewide for Restaurants, Bars, and Other Businesses

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Eight counties placed on Watch List, will face restrictive measures if COVID-19 outbreaks worsen

Salem, OR—In light of rising COVID-19 case counts over the month of June, including a record-high 375 cases yesterday, Governor Kate Brown today announced stepped up enforcement statewide on face covering, physical distancing, and occupancy standards in place for businesses. The effort, led by Oregon Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC), will ensure restaurants, bars, and other businesses comply with COVID-related rules over the Fourth of July holiday weekend and thereafter.

She also added 8 Oregon counties to a Watch List for COVID-19: Jefferson, Lake, Lincoln, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wasco. The spread of COVID-19 in these counties has risen to alarming levels in recent weeks. Analysis by the Oregon

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Health Authority showed alarmingly high per capita rates of case increases and (https://www.oregon.gov) community spread––cases where the infections are not attributable to a specific location or event. This community spread is a serious warning sign for health experts.

Counties on the Watch List will be monitored in the coming days while the Oregon Health Authority and local officials deploy additional capacity to control the spread of the disease. If the counties do not see a downturn quickly, restrictive measures such as business closures or tighter gathering size limits will ensue.

“I am asking Oregonians this holiday weekend to take urgent steps to stop the spread of COVID-19 by wearing face coverings, avoiding large gatherings, and physically distancing,” said Governor Kate Brown. “And state enforcement agencies will be out in force to ensure businesses are in compliance. Those businesses not complying with gathering size limits, face covering requirements, physical distancing rules, and other standards face stiff penalties.”

Staff from the OLCC, supported by OSHA field offices across the state, will be conducting spot checks and inspections all over Oregon during the holiday weekend to ensure restaurants, bars, other businesses, and their patrons are complying with state alcohol laws, OLCC rules, and the requirement to wear a face covering in indoor public spaces. The compliance effort comes after the state reached a new record of 375 new cases of COVID-19 across the state on Thursday.

For businesses that refuse to comply, OSHA and OLCC staff are empowered to take administrative action including issuing citations, fines, and Red Warning Notices if necessary. Red Warning Notices apply to businesses that appear to be in willful violation of the Governor’s executive orders or who refuse to take corrective measures. Such businesses are closed until the hazardous condition is remedied. Violation of a Red Warning Notice results in stiff penalties.

The Governor added, “We stand at a crossroads this weekend––we can either stop the spread of COVID-19, or infections and hospitalizations will rise across Oregon and I will reinstate restrictive measures in impacted counties and business sectors."

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