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Governor Kate Brown Announces One-Week Statewide Pause on Pending County Applications for Reopening

June 11, 2020

Cites increase in COVID-19 cases in both rural and urban communities

Salem, OR—Press availability scheduled for 9 am, June 12

Governor Kate Brown issued the following statement today on the reopening process in Oregon:

“When we began reopening nearly a month ago, I was clear that COVID-19 case counts would rise. We now see that happening in several parts of the state, both urban areas and rural communities.

“As I have said before, reopening comes with real risk. As we navigate the reopening, we are carefully monitoring the capacity of our public health system to respond to COVID-19 cases without becoming overwhelmed.

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The noticeable increase in COVID-19 infections in Oregon over the past week is cause for concern.

“In order to ensure that the virus is not spreading too quickly, I am putting all county applications for further reopening on hold for seven days. This is essentially a statewide 'yellow light.' It is time to press pause for one week before any further reopening.

“This one week pause will give public health experts time to assess what factors are driving the spread of the virus and determine if we need to adjust our approach to reopening. I will work with doctors and public health experts to determine whether to lift this pause or extend it or make other adjustments.

“I want to remind the public that there are very simple precautions each of us should take to reduce the spread of the disease: Avoid large gatherings. Wear a face covering. Stay six feet apart. Wash your hands, cover your cough and stay home when you are sick.”

The Governor’s Office this week received four county applications for reopening. Multnomah County’s application to enter Phase 1 has been put on hold for one week. Applications from Hood River, Marion, and Polk Counties to enter Phase 2 have been put on hold for one week.

In analyzing COVID-19 case data across the state, public health experts at the Oregon Health Authority highlighted several areas of concern, including increased COVID-19 case numbers in both urban and rural communities.

• Cases of COVID-19 are increasing across Oregon affecting both urban and rural areas. Hospitalizations are also beginning to increase in Oregon.

• Multnomah County has seen an increase in residents admitted to the hospital over the last two weeks. The percent of tests that are positive is going up, in the face of increased testing. Over 40% of the new cases in the last week have not been traced to a source.

• Hood River County has seen an increase in new cases over the last week and is managing several simultaneous workplace outbreaks.

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• Marion County has seen an almost 40% increase in cases over the last week and new hospital admissions COVID-19 for county residents has increased over the last two weeks.

• Polk County has seen an increase in cases over the last week and is managing a work site outbreak.

Current status of reopening and all guidelines are available at coronavirus.oregon.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/or-covid-19/) . Currently there are:

• Twenty-nine counties in Phase 2.

• Three counties in Phase 1 that have applied for Phase 2 (Hood River, Marion, and Polk); these applications are being put on hold for one week.

• Three counties in Phase 1 that have not yet applied for Phase 2 (Clackamas, Lincoln, and Washington)

• Multnomah County is in baseline status. County leaders have applied for Phase 1, application is being put on hold

Governor Brown will hold a press availability tomorrow, June 12, at 9:00 am to discuss the statewide pause on reopening. She will be joined by representatives from the Oregon Health Authority.

Members of the media must RSVP for call-in information by emailing our office at Governors.Press@oregon.gov (mailto:Governors.Press@oregon.gov?subject=RE:%20). A live stream will be available for the public that will be posted to the Governor's social media pages.

Teleconference information will be provided to all reporters who RSVP to participate remotely. Thank you for working with us to ensure the health and safety of all participants. Please RSVP by 8 am so we can ensure you receive the call-in information before the press conference begins.

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