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Governor Kate Brown Announces Updates to the County Watch List

July 30, 2020

Portland, OR—Governor Kate Brown today announced that two counties—Lincoln and Union—have succeeded in reducing the spread of COVID-19 sufficiently enough to be removed from the County Watch List. Meanwhile, three counties—Hood River, Marion, and Multnomah—have been added to the Watch List. This brings the total number of counties on the list to ten.

The County Watch List allows the state to prioritize resources and assistance to counties that are seeing the broadest spread of COVID-19. When a county is placed on the Watch List, the Oregon Health Authority increases monitoring and communication, and deploys additional technical assistance and resources, such as epidemiological support, case investigation, and contact tracing help.

“I want to applaud county officials and community members in Lincoln and Union Counties for their diligent work in bringing the spread of COVID-19 under control in these areas. Your leadership shows that we can reduce the spread of this disease if we work together,” said Governor Brown.

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Lincoln and Union Counties were successful in reducing community spread and coming off the Watch List thanks in part to the diligent work of local public health staff, as well as community members who worked to protect themselves, their families, and neighbors. Some of the steps taken include Union County voluntarily moving back to Phase 1 and Lincoln County opting to remain in Phase 1. In addition, the Oregon Health Authority provided case investigation and contact tracing support, including intensive

efforts to reach communities with specific language and cultural needs; neighboring counties also aided the response.

Counties are placed on the Watch List when COVID-19 is spreading quickly and public health officials cannot trace that spread to specific sources—creating a potentially dangerous dynamic. Specific markers of this rapid community spread include when there is a sporadic case rate of 50 or more per 100,000 people in the last two weeks and the county has had more than five sporadic cases in the last two weeks (sporadic cases are those that cannot be traced to a source; they indicate community spread). Counties remain on the Watch List for a minimum of three weeks and until their sporadic case rates drop below these thresholds.

Governor Brown added, “This is also a good reminder to all Oregonians—especially to those who live in Watch List counties—of the importance of remaining vigilant. I urge all Oregonians to keep practicing physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and practicing good hygiene. Your choices matter, and we are truly all in this together.”

The complete County Watch List (https://govstatus.egov.com/reopening-oregon#countyStatuses) now includes the following ten counties: Baker, Hood River, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Marion, Morrow, Multnomah, Umatilla, and Wasco.

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