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Governor Kate Brown Announces Updates to the County Watch List

October 23, 2020

Salem, OR—Governor Kate Brown today announced that Multnomah County has been added to the County Watch List. This addition comes after Multnomah County was removed from the Watch List on August 28. The county remains in Phase 1 of reopening, and it remains grouped with Clackamas and Washington Counties for future reopening decisions. Of these three counties, only Multnomah is on the Watch List at this time. In addition, the Governor announced that two counties—Benton and Clatsop—have succeeded in reducing the spread of COVID-19 sufficiently enough to be removed from the County Watch List.

"Today marks the second time a county has been added back to the Watch List, as well as our state's highest reported case count since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Governor Brown. "This is a sobering reminder that we cannot let down our guard. We must continue to be vigilant in protecting ourselves, our families, and our neighbors from the spread of this disease.

"With cold and flu season upon us—as well as the holidays—I am urging all Oregonians

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continue following the advice and guidance of our medical experts. This means continually practicing physical distancing, wearing face coverings, washing your hands often, and staying home when sick. Unfortunately, this also means limiting travel and family and social get-togethers."

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.

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.

The complete County Watch List (https://oregon.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41b11f32beefba0380ee8ecb5&id=3d30f58398&e=8b2ce66d7f) now includes the following four counties: Lane, Malheur, Multnomah, and Umatilla.

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