



June 18, 2020

Honorable Governor Kate Brown c/o/Jennifer Andrew  
900 Court St NE, Suite 254  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

**Re: Phase II Reopening Application, Clackamas County**

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, we submit this letter requesting that Clackamas County move into Phase II of reopening related to COVID-19 at your approval.

For the past three weeks, Clackamas County has been preparing for Phase II. This new announcement regarding a minimum 21-day wait period to coincide with Multnomah County is disappointing news to those who have been working diligently to contain COVID-19, limit new cases, and promote and follow safety measures. While we understand this is a very difficult decision, we request you consider a number of issues that illustrate the unique position Clackamas County residents and business owners are coping with:

1. Clackamas County has the third highest county population in the state, but did not receive any CARES funding to help manage the restrictions placed on residents as a result of this pandemic. Multnomah and Washington counties have received these resources directly and are already deploying them, Clackamas County does not have this same ability.
2. Marion and Hood River counties, which also border Clackamas County and are mutually traveled by residents of metro area counties, especially Clackamas County, have been approved to open under Phase 2.

Clackamas County entered Phase I on May 23, and is implementing its plans to building capacity for testing, tracing, and isolating new cases. We continue training new contact tracers with 29 FTE available to respond to events, and currently meet 4 of the 6 new criteria required to apply for Phase II. We also continue to work on addressing our PPE shortages, particularly Tyvek suits and gowns for first responder agencies, and have active requests to OHA for those PPE.

For those criteria in Phase II that we are not presently meeting, specifically the increase in new cases and the timeliness of outreach to new cases, this was anticipated to occur as sectors of the community reopen. Staff are currently being trained and our capacity is increasing to meet the needs. We are also working proactively to improve data entry and quality control to improve those public health indicators that are within our control.

In addition to our public health work to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, Clackamas County has put a lot of energy into communicating the importance of the “stay home, stay safe” campaign. Thank you for the state’s recent announcement requiring face coverings for all public indoor spaces. We ask the state to continue to elevate its media campaign – in partnership with local jurisdictions – to stress the importance of the public’s responsibility for preventing the spread of COVID-19. We believe that increased communication on safe public health practices to limit the spread of the virus will prevent future pauses.

We remain committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our residents. We appreciate your hard work in ensuring Oregon comes out ahead of this public health pandemic and eagerly await your decision. Clackamas County stands ready to move into Phase II at your approval.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Bernard". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jim Bernard, Chair

On Behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary Schmidt". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gary Schmidt, County Administrator  
Clackamas County