



April 2, 2020

Governor Kate Brown,

Oregon's local government organizations represented by AOC, LOC, OSBA, SDAO, and Metro have been communicating our unified concerns with legislative leadership in both chambers, as well as the Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response (SJCCR).

Our message to you and to others is simple: local governments are extremely concerned that without statutory relief related to public meetings, budget procedures and legal deadlines, we risk a future where local governments will not be able to deliver critical services in their communities. **It is highly likely that, without an executive order or legislative action, many local governments will have to cease all operations on July 1 of this year.**

There are public notice requirements for the local budget process that start in a matter of weeks—if a local jurisdiction cannot meet those April requirements, the *entire* budget process may be deemed in violation of state law and not a dime of local money can be spent after June 30. This is clearly not the outcome our collective local governments want as we respond to the enormous health and economic crisis that faces our communities. If local governments cannot legally operate after June 30, all of their obligations become the State's problems. There are cities, special districts and schools without internet, let alone high-speed internet, and many have closed their offices to foot traffic and are currently operating remotely.

Some state statutes have strict processes in place with set timelines and public hearing/testimony requirements, which are simply not possible to meet under our current COVID-19 "Stay home, Stay Healthy" standards. Examples beyond budget law include statutes governing public hearing requirements, quorum and land use decisions.

To address these concerns, we urge that swift action be taken in two areas—action that will not cost the State a dime:

1. Extend your use of executive power to provide local governments flexibility on these requirements during the declared emergency; and
2. Call a special session by May 1 to confirm in statute the issues covered in the Executive Order, which are embodied in Section 16 of LC 26.

This is a unified request from the organizations representing cities, counties, special districts, school districts and Metro.

We realize that you and your colleagues are under enormous pressure right now, but we fear that if this matter falls through the cracks, very bad things may soon happen as a result.

Contact:

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