



May 3, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Riley, Chair
The Honorable Bill Hansell, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Labor & Business
900 Court St. NE, Room 453
Portland, OR 97301

RE: City of Beaverton Supports HB 2966A

Dear Chair Riley, Co-Chair Hansell, and members of the Senate Committee on Labor & Business:

Thank you for the opportunity to share the City of Beaverton's strong support of HB 2966A. This bill will provide much needed assistance to Oregon's small businesses, which have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The six-month repayment grace period for commercial tenants – approved by the Legislature last year in HB 2413 – sunsets on March 31, 2021. HB 2966A extends the grace period an additional six months, allowing incoming aid to reach businesses and property owners and prevent a wave of commercial evictions.

COVID-19 has taken a heavy toll on our local businesses, especially those in the retail, restaurant, and service industries that can't operate remotely. The City of Beaverton took early and decisive action to support our businesses through the creation of a business relief grant program. This grant program has provided direct relief to over 500 businesses and has given out over \$4.3 million in emergency grants which do not need to be paid back. Two-thirds of the businesses that received grants are owned by BIPOC and historically underserved Oregonians, which illustrates how particularly vulnerable these communities are to disruptions in the economy.

Business owners have been creative in keeping their businesses operating and their employees employed, often at their own personal financial expense. Extending the repayment grace period will give our local businesses time to get funding from Business Oregon's Commercial Rent Relief Program and the American Rescue Plan Act to cover owed rent. Addressing rent debt will help stabilize the economy and help struggling businesses survive the late stages of this crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to lend our support to HB 2966A. Please feel welcome to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Twete". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cheryl Twete, Director of Community Development
City of Beaverton