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February 18, 2021

Written Testimony Submitted via OLIS Testimony Portal

The Honorable James Manning and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Oregon State Senate
Salem, OR

Re: Support for SB 531

Dear Chair Manning and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Douglas County businesses, the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce wishes to express its support for SB 531.

The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce represents more than 400 businesses (employing more than 15,000 local citizens) that are committed growing business opportunities and providing family-wage jobs in our community. We support entrepreneurs, businesses small and large, and the jobs they create.

This past year has been a difficult one for our business community. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in wide-spread changes to our daily lives, and ultimately, on our ability to do business. With the onset of COVID-19, Governor Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, which shuttered many of our local businesses in the interest of protecting public health and slowing the spread of this virus. These closures resulted in many businesses suffering extensive losses. It meant laying off employees, losing inventory, losing customers, and for some, it meant losing their business entirely.

Like most rural communities, small businesses are the backbone of our county, representing 85-90% of all business. Roseburg and all communities throughout our county greatly depend on local small businesses for services, products, assistance and employment. None have been hit harder during the pandemic and mandated closures than our small businesses and the citizens they employ.

When businesses are closed due to public health emergencies like COVID-19, it is important that the state help those businesses recover. Our local businesses are the life-blood of our community and our economy, especially our small and mid-sized businesses who have shouldered the greatest weight of these closures. We feel it is important for these businesses to be made whole. This is why we support SB 531.



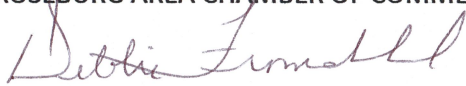
*To advocate for and be the voice of the business community in the greater Roseburg area.
To strengthen, enhance and protect our members through political advocacy, economical development, community promotion and member programs and services.*

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SB 531 would allow businesses to be reimbursed for closures made during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses sacrificed their livelihoods in order to protect the health of Oregonians. In turn, we should help these businesses—and the jobs they provide—survive. We hope you will stand with businesses throughout the state of Oregon and support SB 531.

Best regards,

ROSEBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Debra L. Fromdahl, IOM
President & CEO

ROSEBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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