



February 24, 2021

Dear Chair Power and Members of the House Subcommittee on Civil Law,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 2638.

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 600 members who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community.

This past year has been a difficult one for the business community. The onset of COVID-19 resulted in wide-spread changes to the way businesses operate. Many of our retail businesses quickly pivoted to offer free local delivery. Our restaurants complied with mandates and offered takeout only and took extra care and precautions with sanitations. Our businesses have offered curbside pickup and early hours for our community that is especially vulnerable. We have a local painting art class business that put together kits for delivery when classes couldn't happen.

These are all examples of how our businesses have had to adjust in a constantly shifting environment in order to comply with Governor Brown's executive orders, agency mandates and federal guidelines to protect the health of their employees and the public.

We are worried that even though businesses take steps to follow public health guidelines, they are still at risk of a lawsuit from a customer saying that they didn't do enough to protect them from exposure. Just one of these lawsuits would cripple a local business. It's already tough to keep their doors open in these challenging economic times. Please don't leave them exposed to unnecessary legal risk.

HB 2638 would ensure that businesses acting in good faith would be protected from unwarranted lawsuits. It recognizes the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 emergency and provides timely and targeted protections for businesses at a time when they need it most.

Temporary COVID-19 liability protections are not a license for a business to intentionally ignore safety precautions, but will ensure that employers who are following best practices and state-issued public health guidelines don't suffer further economic harm in this fragile environment.

Our families and business have been through a lot since the coronavirus took hold. We ask you support HB 2638 and COVID liability protections to shield local businesses from legal risk when they are following state public health guidelines to protect employees and customers.

Respectfully,

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