



Friday Forum

3/12/2021

**Oregon Seeing
Light at End of
COVID-19 Tunnel**

**OHBA Adds More
Code-Change
Classes**

**Construction Bill
Updates**

OHBA Week in Review

Oregon Seeing Light at End of COVID-19 Tunnel

As Oregon marks the one-year anniversary of Gov. Kate Brown's COVID-19 emergency declaration on Monday, the rapid decline in new cases and increase in vaccinations have begun to have an effect. More counties have moved out of the Extreme Risk category into High or Moderate Risk, which allows more dining, entertainment, and economic activity.

Gov. Brown announced on Friday an executive order to **return all willing Oregon students to the classroom no later than April 19**. Parents have the option of keeping students at home for continued distance learning. Many districts in lower risk areas have already begun bringing students back.

Federal Stimulus

The U.S. Senate late Saturday approved a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus package similar to the CARES Act signed into law in March 2020. The bill now goes back to the U.S. House for approval and President Biden for his signature. It includes:

- \$350 billion for state, local, and tribal governments to respond to the public health emergency and replace lost revenue.
- \$126 billion for K-12 schools and \$40 billion for higher education.
- Direct payments of \$1,400 per person who makes less than \$75,000 annually (or couples who make less than \$150,000). Dependents would also receive \$1,400 each. These payments phase out entirely for individuals who make more than \$80,000 (or

couples makes more than \$160,000).

- Extending the \$300-per-week unemployment benefit boost through early September.

Redistricting Update

The U.S. Census Bureau recently announced that updated census data will not be available to the public until the end of September, tacking an additional six months onto the original expectations. This is going to complicate the redistricting process and likely lead to further delays past the August 15 deadline in the redistricting plan published by the Secretary of State's office. OHBA CEO Mark Long recently testified at the Joint Committee hearing on March 2nd.

(Click icon to play video)



OHBA Adds More Code-Change Classes

OHBA Code-Change Classes kicked-off earlier this month with Mike Goodrich presenting an overview of the changes occurring this fall.

Additional classes have been scheduled for the end of March and start of April to aid builders with design plan changes for new structural, mechanical, and HVAC ducts inside the home. Visit [the OHBA website](#) to sign-up for a future class.

Oregon Legislature

Meanwhile at the Oregon Capitol, the first bills passed the Senate last week and 130 new ones were introduced. Because of the slow rollout of committee hearings, technical glitches, snow days, and the one-day Republican walkout, legislators are feeling the crunch to get bills moving. This sense of urgency may lead to expediency at the cost of efficacy in the coming weeks.

In a perfect world, each bill would receive thorough vetting and amendment process to fine tune the language and eliminate unintended consequences. As more work is piled on committee desks, the time for such review decreases.

Other Bills of Note

[SB 169](#) - Reduces the length of non-compete agreements to 12 months from 18 months and defines a noncompetition agreement as a written agreement instead of a written, oral or implied agreement. **Passed out of Senate Labor and Business 5-0.**

[HB 2475](#) - Requires the Public Utility Commission (PUC) provide a classification of services that takes into account the different energy burdens low-income Oregonians face as well as other social equity and environmental justice factors that affect affordability. The bill also allows financial assistance to be provided to organizations that represent low-income Oregonians. **Passed 4-3 on a party line vote.**

[HB 2607](#) - Exempts residential housing that was destroyed by wildfire from construction taxes when rebuilding. Applies to residential housing that was damaged or destroyed after January 1, 2020. **Passed 10-0 and was referred to Revenue.**

