



# DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**CHRIS BOICE TIM FREEMAN TOM KRESS**

Douglas County Courthouse, Room 217  
1036 SE Douglas Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon 97470

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 24, 2020**

## **Douglas County Board of Commissioners Respond to Recent AOC Statement**

(Douglas County, Oregon) The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) issued a statement on Friday, August 21, 2020 in response to the latest press conference from Oregon's Governor earlier that day. The Douglas County Board of Commissioners wanted to clearly state that the AOC does not speak on behalf of Douglas County, nor did they ask for or obtain approval from any of our Douglas County Commissioners prior to releasing their statement.

### **Your Douglas County Board of Commissioners hold the following positions on this matter:**

- 1) First and foremost, **we stand with, represent and support** the citizens and businesses operating in Douglas County. We want our citizens to be healthy and have access to necessary services; to help our businesses succeed; and for everyone in our county to continue to move forward to social and economic stability.
- 2) Second, we do not support county "enforcement" of State issued COVID guidelines. Instead, as the local public health authority, we feel it is paramount for State officials to provide easy to understand, timely access to the latest information, resources and medical guidance in order to educate residents about COVID that allows them to make informed, responsible decisions. This information should also flow directly to the County Commissioners, so they can share with their residents. We feel that most people will do the right thing, if given the opportunity and knowledge to do so.
- 3) Third, while we do not speak on behalf of other Oregon counties, we do know that it is impossible for the State to understand all the unique needs and complexities of each and every one of our 36 diverse Oregon counties. The State should not question our ability to meet the needs of our constituents, instead they should support and coordinate with the Commissioners in each of our Counties. It is imperative that the State realizes that the needs will be different for each individual county. This is definitely not a 'one-size fits all scenario', it should be a 36 size scenario with a supportive, collaborative county-by-county assessment of need.
- 4) Fourth, the State needs to work directly with the County Commissioners. Information, support and communication should not be provided or accessed through an unclear maze of emergency managers, the AOC or public health officials. The County Commissioners are the ones making the difficult decisions day in and day out for our residents. We have struggled to get the State to communicate directly with our Commissioners on COVID-19 matters, and instead we have had to meander through an unnecessary pandemic maze. This includes access to Federal CARES Act Funding and Reimbursements that were sent to the State to pass along to counties. The State placed additional restrictions on these relief dollars, and has made it incredibly difficult for Counties to spend the dollars where they are needed most. With the added restrictions, the Douglas County Commissioners are fearful to spend any relief dollars, due to trepidation of future imposed sanctions from the State.
- 5) The State needs to recognize, appreciate and applaud the hard work that most counties have accomplished in the last five and half months with their response to the COVID pandemic in their respective counties. They need to understand that our County Commissioners are the ones working with local boots-on-the-ground in coordinating our local Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team (DCCRT), supporting Douglas Public Health Network's (DPHN) drive-through clinics, providing public health education, coordinating volunteers, helping to support our

local medical community, organizing supplies, running a local COVID hotline and sending out daily informational updates. We were the first county to perform drive-through COVID testing and continue to conduct 2-3 clinics a week. We conduct weekly public Facebook Live Q&A sessions with our Douglas County Public Health Officer, Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer. We have created and shared numerous visuals and graphics to illustrate our concerted efforts to slow the spread of the virus. We were one of the first counties to submit our application for Phase One and Phase Two reopening. We continue to have one of the lowest positivity rates in the Nation. The DCCRT has made it a priority to provide daily updates to our residents and to date our Joint Information Team has issued over 250 COVID press releases that are released via our e-Newsletter subscription base, Flash Alert, direct email list and shared on our social media channels. These releases have been sent every day for the last 169 days straight.

Our Douglas County Commissioners along with our public health partner, DPHN and the DCCRT, are a leading force in Oregon by executing forward thinking solutions to combat the spread of the coronavirus in our County. We are also working hard to help our residents and businesses weather the social and economic storms.

*“While our main priority for this pandemic has been to save lives and prevent the continued spread of the virus, we want to make it clear that we will continue to advocate for better coordination, education and communication from State Officials working directly with County Commissioners. It is imperative that the State treat us as a partner in this fight and not the enemy,”* commented Commissioner Tim Freeman.

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#### **Reminder from the DCCRT**

Stay up to date on COVID-19 in Douglas County on the [Douglas County Government website](#) or the [DPHN website](#). Your Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas County Public Health Officer, Dr. Robert Dannenhoffer and the Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team (DCCRT) have been working hard to cooperatively provide accurate and timely information to Douglas County residents and businesses since March 8, 2020. Our local COVID-19 updates represent the coordinated effort of the agencies that make up the DCCRT.

**Local COVID-19 Hotline** If you have questions about COVID-19 and available local resources, call the Douglas County COVID-19 Hotline at (541) 464-6550. It is staffed by local volunteers from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, 7 days a week.

**Contact Tamara Howell**, Douglas County Emergency Communications & Community Engagement Specialist (PIO)  
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