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NEWS RELEASE

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Capitol Building Will Close to Public Until Further Notice

SALEM, Ore. – Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek released the following statement about operations at the Capitol building in response to the coronavirus pandemic:

“In light of the developing coronavirus pandemic, we have made the decision to close the Capitol to the public and all non-essential personnel, effective Wednesday, March 18 until further notice. This is a difficult decision. The Capitol is the people’s building. Keeping it open and accessible will always be important to us.

“Last week we curtailed operations at the Capitol, reducing staff to essential personnel and canceling meetings and tours. However, following CDC and OHA guidelines, it is clear that we need to close the building to the public. We hope this measure demonstrates the seriousness of this situation and the importance of social distancing to slow down the spread of the coronavirus.

“This closure does not change our plans for a forthcoming special session to address the statewide impact of coronavirus on families, workers and businesses. We are currently working with Legislative Administration, the Governor’s office and others to asses how we can move forward with a special session in the coming weeks in order to provide needed relief. Public health will

have to be balanced with public participation by implementing social distancing, taking remote testimony, limiting staffing and enhancing cleaning.”

The Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response will hold its first meeting on Wednesday, March 18 at 10 a.m. Members of the public can submit ideas, feedback and testimony via email to jscvr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov by 5 p.m. Wednesday. Written testimony will be posted on OLIS and the committee meeting will be [livestreamed on OLIS](#). Members of the media are encouraged to stream the hearing online. Please contact Danny Moran or Lisa Taylor with any follow up questions.

Oregonians can still reach their legislators by email and phone. Contact information, along with building announcements, newsletters and more can be found at www.oregonlegislature.gov/.

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