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Emergency Board Allocates Resources for Struggling Workers, Small Businesses, Those Facing Disparate Impacts

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Legislature’s Joint Emergency Board today allocated more than \$200 million to support COVID-19 relief efforts, specifically targeting investments to struggling workers, small businesses and Oregonians facing the deepest and most disparate impacts of the pandemic.

House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland) applauded the work that has been done by community organizations, individual legislators, workgroups and the presiding officers to take immediate and significant steps to help people now.

“For the countless Oregonians struggling during this time, whether they are waiting on unemployment insurance, trying to figure how to keep their business open, or are experiencing the disproportionate impacts of deep-seated racial inequality, today will hopefully provide some small measure of relief,” Majority Leader Smith Warner said. “The work of the Legislature’s Emergency Board over the last several months has been focused on getting resources to Oregonians as quickly as possible, because they need help now. While we recognize that these are just small steps forward, we will continue to work together over the coming months to best utilize whatever resources we have at our disposal to build a better Oregon for all.”

Among the investments made by the Emergency Board today are:

- \$62 million to the Oregon Cares Fund for Black Relief and Resiliency to provide economic relief to Black individuals and businesses. National and state data show that the Black community is experiencing a disproportionate share of negative economic and health effects due to COVID-19.
- \$50 million to support music, culture, and community venues and organizations that have been closed, cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic.
- \$35 million to fund \$500 Emergency Relief Checks to Oregonians who are still waiting for unemployment benefits.
- \$30 million to the COVID-19 Leave Fund for workers who contract or have been exposed to the virus but do not qualify for traditional sick leave.
- \$25.6 million in emergency assistance for small businesses facing financial shortfalls due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This supports businesses with no more than 25 employees

that have not received support under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or other provisions of the federal CARES Act.

- \$3.58 million of General Fund for infrastructure and improvements to the Warm Springs Indian Reservation water and wastewater systems.

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