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CONTACT: Amanda Kraus, 503-986-1074

Amanda.Kraus@oregonlegislature.gov

Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner Statement on July Emergency Board Meeting

SALEM – Today, the Joint Emergency Board held a virtual meeting in order to allocate over \$200 million to assist Oregonians who are struggling as a result of our public health crisis and historic injustice. In response, Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego) issued the following statement:

“The funds distributed by the Emergency Board will provide critical support to individuals, families and businesses in need. These past few months have altered lives and affected every corner of our state. In addition, we have seen the COVID-19 crisis exacerbate existing historic inequities.

“Targeted assistance to Black Oregonians and Black-owned businesses is an important step to acknowledge the years of divestment in the Black community as well as the policies that have widened disparities and have rendered economic resiliency a tremendous challenge for Black Oregonians. We must continue to approach policy decisions and investments in Oregon’s recovery with equity as a top priority.

“Across Oregon workers are struggling. Many are waiting on Unemployment Insurance or need to take time off work due to COVID-19 but do not qualify for leave or cannot afford to take the necessary time off. Direct relief checks for those waiting on their Unemployment Insurance claims and for those who need to take leave will provide some cushion during this economically strenuous time.

“The Emergency Board also provided support to music, culture and community venues. These entities have taken necessary steps to postpone or cancel their programs in order to prioritize public health. We want to ensure our communities can still benefit from their cultural contributions when they can safely reopen. The Board also put funds toward small businesses who did not receive support through the Paycheck Protection Program.

“These allocations of federal Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars will help address some of the economic strain caused, and deepened, by this public health crisis. However, there is no question Oregon needs additional federal assistance in order to ensure we can provide support and services individuals and families across our state rely on.”

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