



May 13, 2020

KATE BROWN
Governor

Columbia County Board of Commissioners
Alex Tardif, Board Chair
230 Strand St., Courthouse Room 338
St. Helens, OR 97051

Chair Tardif,

Thank you for the effort you, your hospitals and your public health experts put into your plan for meeting the prerequisites demonstrating your county's preparedness for beginning to lift restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to inform you that your county's application to enter Phase I on May 15th has been approved.

My goals for a safe and strong Oregon:

1. Minimize hospitalizations and deaths;
2. Allow people to return to work so they can support themselves and their families;
3. Minimize risk to frontline workers;
4. Avoid overwhelming the health care system;
5. Protect those at highest risk of severe illness, especially the elderly, those with underlying health conditions, and communities of color; and
6. Support social/cultural/spiritual reopening for small groups that preserve community cohesion and cultural practices.

I want to be clear that reopening does not come without risks. With every restriction lifted we know transmission of the virus has the potential to increase. The contact tracing, testing and personal protective equipment requirements that were part of the conditions for opening will be essential to mitigate that transmission increase.

The Oregon Health Authority will be monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in your county, and throughout the state, and will be ready to work with you if any concerns arise.

Thank you for all of your hard work and vigilance on behalf of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown