



**CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON**

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**CLARK COUNTY COUNCIL**

Eileen J. Quiring, Chair  
Temple Lentz, Julie Olson, John Blom, Gary Medvigy

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April 7, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO BOX 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Re: Proclamation 20-25

Dear Governor Inslee,

During this time of crisis, we all respect the difficult decisions you have to make for the common good of all Washingtonians. We are urging further refinement of your guidance for essential construction throughout the state, but will focus on Clark County. We are advocating that you deem all housing presently under construction and all commercial construction near completion to be deemed essential in much the same way Oregon and California have.

We respect and trust that all builders, unions, skilled and unskilled labor in all trades are using best practices and protocols of social distancing to minimize the risks from COVID-19 to our workforce and community. There has been no specific outbreak attributed to the building industry in the private or public sector, in part, because they remain focused on OSHA standards, health and safety at the work place more so than the public at large. We believe that our hard-working construction industry, using best health and safety practices, would rather be working than furloughed and on unemployment. Please allow them back to work.

We believe the breadth of the current order will create far more devastation to our economy in Clark County, because of our more severe housing shortage as one of the fastest growing areas in the state. This shortage contributes to high costs and increasing homelessness. Our county budget is aggravated here more than anywhere in the state due to sales tax leakage to Oregon, causing a structural deficit from the loss of approximately 25% of sales tax revenue. Approximately 35% of the County's sales tax has come from construction related activities. In 2019, our General Fund received \$43.0M in sales tax or \$15.0 million sales tax generated by construction activity alone. The near complete shut-down of our construction industry and loss of revenue in Clark County is dire.

An unusually large segment of Clark County's economy is based on the construction industry, equating to approximately 15,600 jobs. In Washington State the economic impact is about \$8.4B per year, or \$23M per day. Our best estimates in Clark County based on our population and construction jobs would amount to 10% of those state numbers. The annual statewide tax revenue, for state and local



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governments, is around \$2.2B. Proportioned to Clark County, this is around \$4.2M per week in Clark County alone in tax revenue lost to the state and county for every week a broad building moratorium remains in place.

In addition, spoilage is now becoming a significant problem with the weather and increased theft occurring. Although, your present order allows for protecting construction, 'shear inspections' need to be done before a structure can be weathered-in and those can't be conducted all at once throughout the county with the current constraints. OSB board, for example can only be in the weather for no more than 60 days, before deterioration, and mold set in. Our local contractors will go where the work is and that is next door to Oregon. Once, construction resumes here, the work force will not be available for our job sites. We will be facing an ever increasing percentage of spoilage as a result.

The dire need for housing and the continuation of essential construction and trade jobs in our county cries out for refinement of the previous orders. We all understand that all decisions should be 'conditions based' and those change daily with many unknowns. But we are focusing on what is known. Families are waiting to move into their nearly completed homes. We respectfully request that essential business be further defined to include residential housing under construction and commercial construction that is near completion.

Respectfully,



Eileen Quiring, Chair



Julie Olson, District 2



John Blom, District 3



Gary Medvigy, District 4