



March 19, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor, State of Oregon
Office of the Governor
900 Court St NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Shelter-in-Place Orders and Real Estate as an Essential Service

Dear Governor Brown,

The Oregon Association of REALTORS® (OAR) is supportive of the bold actions being initiated by your office and the Legislature to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and the novel coronavirus across our state. Yesterday, OAR joined other statewide industry advocates in a letter to members of the Legislature's Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response to both affirm our commitment to doing our part to protect the health of all Oregonians and to ask members to act swiftly to plan for and mitigate the economic disruption that has accompanied this health crisis.

OAR is aware that several jurisdictions around the country have implemented "shelter-in-place," orders in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. While we hope a similar policy does not become necessary here in Oregon, we recognize it is a possibility. In the event that kind of serious action becomes required, we would like to be proactive in offering our perspective on the impact such an order may have on the real estate industry and to provide you with our comments on the nature of real estate services as essential business functions in our state.

As the statewide voice for REALTORS and the real estate industry, OAR respectfully requests your consideration of the inclusion of real estate services among "essential services," or "essential business functions," when crafting language that may establish a shelter-in-place order in Oregon. Essential services related to real estate transactions include, but are not limited to, title searches, appraisals, permitting, inspections, home staging, construction, moving, as well as the recordation, legal, financial, and other services necessary to complete a transfer or refinance of real property.

Oregon's real estate industry is a critical driver of the state's economy. Given the urgency of the outbreak, it is more important than ever to preserve the ability of real estate professionals to shepherd clients through complicated property transactions, especially those that may be in the final stages. REALTORS® will continue to act with an abundance of caution as they help current and aspiring Oregonian homeowners move out of or into their homes.

The many questions and concerns we have received from members so far have made it clear that real estate professionals are, first and foremost, committed to protecting public health and personal safety in the face of this outbreak. Additionally, they are intent on ensuring their essential business operations can continue as we navigate any reasonable actions state leaders deem necessary to slow the spread of the virus. Businesses need the utmost clarity with regards to who is exempt from shelter-in-place orders, and any new legal definitions of "essential services," or "essential business," must be well defined to prevent confusion.

We look forward to partnering with you to keep Oregonians healthy and to ensure the regulatory environment remains reasonably navigable as we face this unprecedented crisis together. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Palermo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a star symbol above the letter 'i' in "Palermo".

Lori Palermo
2020 OAR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Pakula". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jenny Pakula
CEO