

# Governor restores 'critical restrictions' to stem COVID-19 rise

## Restaurants and bars restricted to take-out only

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon will restrict or close many businesses, curtail activities and put a six-person limit on gatherings, including Thanksgiving, under a statewide "Two-Week Freeze" starting Nov. 18 in an effort to stem rising COVID-19 infection rates, Gov. Kate Brown announced Friday.

"These risk reduction measures are critical," Brown said.

The executive order comes as Oregon reported 1,076 new cases, a day after a record-smashing 1,122 cases. Seven deaths were reported Friday.

The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 was 303 Friday, the first time the state has breached the 300-patient mark since the pandemic crisis hit Oregon in February.

Without a drop in infection rates, medical facilities will be

strained beyond capacity.

"The last thing you want to hear is the ambulance has no place to go," Brown said. "The dreaded winter surge is here."

Despite enduring two previous spikes in the spring and late summer, the current rise may be more challenging.

"Like it or not, we might be facing the roughest days of the pandemic," Brown said.

Brown said she was telling individual Oregonians to limit social events to six people and that she had ordered the Oregon State Police to begin working with local law enforcement to limit social gatherings and use their discretion to enforce as a citation, fine or arrest of a Class C Misdemeanor.

Brown had said earlier this summer that she would not be "the party police" and send officers to private gatherings to enforce limits. That's no longer the policy, she said.

"Unfortunately we have no other option," Brown said.

Currently, one infected person is spreading the disease to 1.5 people. COVID-19 tests are coming back at a level of 11.9%



PMG file photo

**Gov. Kate Brown, at a May press event, wearing her social distancing mask in public.**

positive. A rate above 5% indicates a rise in the number of people who will get ill.

For businesses, activities and groups that do not fall under the new restrictions, the Oregon Health Authority will issue additional guidance within the next week. Sectors without specific prohibitions or guidance must operate under previous directives.

Brown and the governors of California and Washington earlier on Friday issued iden-

tical travel advisories. Travelers going out of state are urged to quarantine for 14 days upon their return home.

Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state's top infectious disease expert, said decisions on public action "are not perfect" and that state officials know that ordering shutdowns or stay-at-home orders have their own negative impacts.

"That economic impact has a real impact on our health," Sidelinger said. "People can't

tolerate that level of isolation for that long."

Brown said Oregon and all states need new federal help to cushion the economic fallout and overstretched public resources used in the pandemic.

"It's time for Congress to just do it and stop talking about it," Brown said.

Oregon is still experiencing less overall impact from the virus than other states. It had experienced 1,289 cases per 100,000 people — 45th among states, according to analysis on Friday by the New York Times. North Dakota tops the list with 7,953 cases per 100,000 people.

But in the past seven days, the Times said Oregon had 20.5 cases per 100,000, moving it up to a rank of 42nd — higher than California and New York.

Oregon's current rapid rise is already stretching hospital availability in the Portland area and showing strain elsewhere in the state.

Delaying elective surgeries in some areas where hospital beds are becoming more scarce has already been instituted at three major hospital providers

based in the Portland area: Legacy Health, Oregon Health & Science University and Kaiser Permanente Northwest. Check with doctors or medical centers for their status.

Pfizer-BioNTech announced this week that preliminary results of a vaccine under development had a 90% effective rate. Additional tests and reviews will be required, but the company hopes to start shipping vaccines by the end of the year. However, it will likely take several months for the vaccine to become widely available.

Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease expert with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, writing in The Hill political website, said this week the vaccine development was good news, but there are still many hurdles to get it to people around the globe.

"If everything goes perfectly with this vaccine, there is still a Herculean vaccine distribution task that lies ahead," Adalja wrote. "This vaccine, and several other candidates, are two-dose vaccines that require both doses for full effect."

## Oregon joins tri-state travel advisory to limit spread of COVID-19

14-day quarantine recommended for interstate travelers

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Travelers going out of state are urged to quarantine for 14 days upon their return home under a new tri-state advisory to slow rapidly rising COVID-19 infection rates released Friday morning by Gov. Kate Brown.

California and Washington issued identical travel advisories Friday morning.

The action came a day after Oregon reported a record-smashing 1,122 new cases, including four deaths, Thursday. The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 breached the 300-patient mark since the pandemic crisis hit Oregon in February.

**"COVID-19 DOES NOT STOP AT STATE LINES. AS HOSPITALS ACROSS THE WEST ARE STRETCHED TO CAPACITY, WE MUST TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE TRAVELERS ARE NOT BRINGING THIS DISEASE HOME WITH THEM."**

—Gov. Kate Brown

While Oregon is still experiencing less overall impact from the virus than other states, the current rapid rise is already stretching hospital availability in the Portland area and showing strain elsewhere in the state.

Under the three-state plan announced Friday morning, "non-essential travel" should be cancelled or delayed.

The advisory defines essential travel as travel for work and study, critical infrastructure support, economic services and supply chains, health, immediate medical care, and safety and security.

Visitors entering or returning from the three states should minimize their exposure to others for 14 days after arriving from another state. In the case of the three states, the advisory would mean an Oregonian traveling to California or Washington should quarantine for 14 days on their arrival and then another 14 days upon return.

The governors of the three states reiterated early requests that residents not risk out-of-state travel for the Thanksgiving holiday.

"COVID-19 does not stop at state lines," Brown said in a statement. "As hospitals across the West are stretched to capacity, we must take steps to ensure travelers are not bringing this disease home with them."

The three-state advisory also recommends individuals limit their interactions to their immediate household.

The United States registered 150,000 cases on Thursday, a new record. Current hospitalizations for COVID-19 hit a new record of 67,096 on Thursday, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

California on Thursday became the second state to surpass one million case. Texas is the other.

Pfizer-BioNTech announced this week that preliminary results of a vaccine under development had a 90% effective rate. Additional tests and reviews will be required, but the company hopes to start shipping the vaccine by the end of the year. However, it will likely take several months for the vaccine to become widely available.

Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease expert with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, writing in The Hill political website, said this week the vaccine development was good news, but there were still many hurdles to get it to people around the globe.

"If everything goes perfectly with this vaccine, there is still a Herculean vaccine distribution task that lies ahead," Adalja wrote. "This vaccine, and several other candidates, are two-dose vaccines that require both doses for full effect."

## Rep. Bynum seeks Oregon House speakership

By Peter Wong  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Rep. Janelle Bynum of Clackamas has declared she will seek to wrest the House speakership from Tina Kotek, the Portland Democrat who has held the job for the past eight years.

Bynum was just reelected to her third term from District 51, which covers parts of Clackamas and Multnomah counties.

Kotek was reelected to her eighth term from District 44 in North and Northeast Portland.

The 37 Democratic representatives in the newly elected House are scheduled to meet in closed session on Monday to choose their nominee for speaker and other party caucus leaders.

The 23 Republicans already chose Rep. Christine Drazen of Canby for another cycle. Drazen ousted outgoing Rep. Carl Wilson of Grants Pass as party leader during the 2019 session.

The choice of the majority party usually prevails when the House elects its speaker on opening day, which is Jan. 11.

Unlike the speaker and the speaker pro tem, who presides over the House when the speaker is absent, the other leaders are not subject to a vote of the full House.

Along with the Senate president, the House speaker is one of the two most influential figures in the Oregon Legislature. The presiding officers control the flow of legislation through their appointment of committee members and



Contributed photo

**Rep. Janelle Bynum, D-Happy Valley, at one of her McDonald's franchises in the Portland area.**

leaders and the assignment of bills to committees.

If Bynum succeeds in her quest, she would be the first woman of color to hold the speakership in Oregon history.

Her statement, which she issued Monday, Nov. 9, said in part:

"Transparency, diversity of thought and simplicity are my core values as a legislator and leader. Every day I bring these principles to life in both my words and deeds.

"Now, more than ever before, our state needs a leader who listens to the electorate, leads by empowering her colleagues and understands both the social and financial implications of policies so important to Oregonians."

Bynum and her husband, Mark, own four restaurants in the

Portland area, including McDonald's franchises.

She earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1996 from Florida A&M University and a master's in business administration in 2000 from the University of Michigan.

She is the current chair of the House Judiciary Committee. Along with Sen. James Manning, D-Eugene, she is co-chair of the Legislature's joint committee looking at change in police practices.

The most recent speaker to lose a bid for a new term as presiding officer was Republican Lynn Lundquist of Powell Butte, now deceased, who was ousted by Republican Lynn Snodgrass of Damascus in the 1999 session. Both ran for Oregon secretary of state in 2000; Snodgrass won the

## State audit recommends diverting unclaimed Bottle Bill funds

By Michael Kohn  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregonians recycle lots of bottles and cans, but those that are picked up curbside, or are just lost, are never redeemed for their deposit. State auditors now say Oregon has a chance to collect those deposits and use the money for environmental and recycling programs.

That's according to a report issued Nov. 10 by the Secretary of State's Audits Division, which called for a modernization of the groundbreaking Bottle Bill, produced nearly 50 years ago. Those deposits could add tens of millions of dollars to the state's budget.

Under the current system, beverage distributors keep unredeemed deposits. The proposed changes would allow the state to collect the deposits as uncollected property — a potential boon for government environmental programs but at the same time a financial hit for beverage distributors.

The changes stem from Oregon's bottle bill, a landmark program developed in 1971 to help combat rampant litter piling up in forests and along highways. Lawmakers at the time saw the idea of a deposit as the best incentive to get Oregonians to return their cans and bottles.

The 5-cent deposit per can was significant in 1971, when a six-

pack of beer cost around \$1.05, or about 39% of the sales price. A six-pack of beer today averages around \$10, so the existing 10-cent deposit per can represents only around 6% of the sales price.

Nine other states and British Columbia have since followed Oregon in implementing their bottle deposit rules.

But Oregon is facing budget cuts in upcoming years, according to the audit, and it recommends that the Oregon Liquor Control Commission work with the unclaimed property division to pursue unclaimed property related to the Bottle Bill.

According to the state audit, \$30.6 million in unredeemed deposits were collected last year by beverage distributors. Bryant Haley, alcohol spokesperson for the state's Liquor Control Commission, said most of that went to the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, and the remaining funds were collected by other distributors.

Of the 10 states that have a bottle bill, eight collect unredeemed deposits to support environmental programs or the general fund. The state auditors also recommended expanding the scope of the bottle bill to include wine and liquor sales.

"Oregon has an opportunity to enhance state revenues by adopting the practices of other states by

collecting unredeemed container deposits," according to the audit. "Natural resource programs are facing budget shortfalls and unredeemed containers could help solve some of the gap."

The cooperative, which operates the Bottle Drop recycling centers, is largely funded by the current system and has the most at stake if changes are made to the way unredeemed deposits are handled. Around 10% of bottles are not redeemed, according to the cooperative.

In 2019 the recycling cooperative had a \$44 million budget and received \$18.2 million in funding from unredeemed deposits in Oregon, said Jules Bailey, chief stewardship officer for the recycling co-op. That shortfall required co-op members to pay nearly \$26 million into the system.

"If the state had taken all those unredeemed deposits, it would have increased costs in the system by 69% for our members," said Bailey.

"Frankly, our members would not be able to absorb that, and they would have to pass it on to their customers. All in all, it would mean the end of the BottleDrop system as we know it and that Oregonians have come to rely on," he said.

The cooperative, which has over 200 members including Columbia Distributing and Big-

foot Beverage, argues that states that claim unredeemed deposits achieve less success compared to Oregon, with lower can and bottle return rates.

"Most of those systems are struggling, with return rates below 70%. California just announced their redemption rate has fallen to almost 60%. As a result, other states are looking to copy Oregon's success and program, not the other way around," according to a statement from the cooperative.

Mark Pettinger, spokesperson for the Liquor Control Commission, said the commission's role in changing the rule is limited to compliance and enforcement of the Bottle Bill.

"The audit provides an opportunity to stand back and assess how one of Oregon's most iconic laws could continue to evolve," said Pettinger. "At the governor's direction, we will work with other stakeholders regarding existing unclaimed property laws."

Larry Sidor, co-founder of Bend-based Crux Fermentation Project, said if the cooperative is not funded at its current amount, Oregon's recycling program is likely to fail and brewers, retailers and others in the beverage industry would need to bail it out.

"That would be a big financial burden," said Sidor. "In short, the funds collected should go directly to ORBC, not the State of Oregon."