

From: [PUC PUC.PublicComments * PUC](#)
To: [DOUGHERTY Michael * PUC](#)
Cc: [MENZA Candice * PUC](#); [TOEWS Kimberly * PUC](#)
Subject: FW: PUC Workshop for Small Business
Date: Friday, July 9, 2021 7:13:10 AM

[Public comment in UM 2114.](#)

From: M C <britelad@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 8, 2021 5:45 PM
To: PUC PUC.PublicComments * PUC <PUC.PUBLICCOMMENTS@puc.oregon.gov>
Cc: diane@utilityadvocates.org
Subject: PUC Workshop for Small Business

Oregon Public Utility Commission

201 High St. SE, Suite 100

Salem, Oregon 97301-3398

July 8, 2021

Honored Commissioners,

As a volunteer utility advocate with the Jackson County Fuel Committee (JCFC) and a supporter of the Small Business Utility Advocacy (SBUA) group, I respectfully request that the Oregon Public Utility Commission, in collaboration with the SBA and the regional Utility Companies, convene a business focused workshop exploring options and solutions for the small business owners affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the State of Oregon.

These small businesses are utility consumers that represent a large economic engine in Oregon and many have experienced disastrous outcomes due to Covid19 restrictions.

I am concerned after perusing the statistics relating to a high percentage of business arrearages, particularly in my local region. All of which demonstrates the deleterious effect the pandemic has had on the economic health of Oregon's businesses. I have observed that these percentages have increased significantly since the January 2020 period. These businesses are being required to pay for the cost of keeping their businesses functional while not being able to do business and/or serve customers because of forced closures.

I would like to see the State of Oregon direct Federal government emergency dollars to alleviate these small business utility arrearages which would be a benefit to our economic survival under these unusual and unfortunate circumstances. Furthermore, I would wish the PUC include a 'disconnect' moratorium that has benefitted residential customers, for small business for the duration.

In addition, I have a concern that the utility arrearages due to COVID-19 related costs will be included in overall future rate increases from the utility companies attempting to recoup the past due amounts. Even though these are debts that could not have been avoided under the current pandemic disaster and mandated closures.

The benefit of a small business workshop is that there are many options that can be discussed, considered and recommended in a workshop. I look forward to hearing the ideas put forwarded by the small business customers, the utility companies, the SBA and the Oregon PUC in a business oriented workshop environment.

Very sincerely,

Marko Cook

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