



For Immediate Release
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Self-service option provides relief to struggling fuel stations *88 percent of stations face workforce shortage due to pandemic*

PORTLAND, Ore – April 9, 2020 – Locally-owned fuel stations applauded the flexibility that the Governor Brown and the State Fire Marshal provided them today by extending self-service fueling options through the end of April.

“Like many small businesses, Oregon’s locally-owned fuel stations are facing incredible challenges,” stated Danelle Romain, a lobbyist representing the Oregon Fuels Association. “Keeping stations open by giving customers the option of pumping their own fuel is significant.”

In the wake of stay-at-home orders associated with COVID-19, many local stations face staffing shortages as attendants look to avoid direct, face-to-face contact associated with full-service fueling. In a recent survey of their members, the Oregon Fuels Association says 88 percent of local station owners reported having employees unable to report to work or had resigned as a result of the pandemic. Three-fifths of them also reported that employees have asked to be removed from face-to-face interactions with customers. Staffing crunches have meant stations around the state have reduced their hours of operation, with some closing up shop entirely.

“Like all of us, fuel attendants want to be able to follow orders around social distancing and keeping themselves safe,” Romain said. “The self-service option is allowing employees to shift their focus from close, face-to-face interaction with customers to keeping pumps and payment mechanisms clean and sanitized for the next customer.”

The State Fire Marshal’s order does not mandate that stations move to self-service. Rather, it lays out specific guidance for stations choosing to offer self-service options and specifies sanitation measures that stations must follow. It does not change Oregon law in counties already authorized to offer self-service to retail customers.

The Oregon Fuels Association is also quick to note that 90 percent of Oregon's fuel stations are locally-owned. "This isn't 'big oil' that we're talking about here," Romain said. "These are local station owners who employ local people and they want to do everything that they can to protect them from this virus while providing fueling options to people in their community."

The latest action by the Office of the State Fire Marshal extends the self-service order through April 25.

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ABOUT THE OREGON FUELS ASSOCIATION

Oregon Fuels Association is the voice for Oregon's locally-owned fuel stations and distributors. Representing hundreds of retail and commercial fuel stations and associated businesses across the state, OFA is a leading source of information, educational resources and advocacy within the industry.