



Thurston County Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 1427, Olympia WA 98507
www.thurstonchamber.com

Thurston Economic Development Council
Center for Business & Innovation
4220 6th Ave SE, Lacey WA 98503
www.thurstonedc.com

May 13, 2020

Councilmember Renata Rollins
PO Box 1967
Olympia, WA 98507-1967

Councilmember Rollins:

In our combined 45 years working together in Thurston County on community and economic development, we have never been as disappointed in an elected official's actions as when we read your posting calling on people to ignore and disrupt our social and economic underpinnings during a time of regional and national crisis. We find your call to action inappropriate, irresponsible, and nothing more than opportunistic bashing of human endeavors you neither value nor understand.

We also suspect that our disappointment is exactly what you are seeking, and it is tempting for us to ignore your bitterness towards those individuals that are building community and whose businesses and interests are critical to any future economic recovery for all. But it would be irresponsible for us in our positions to ignore you and let your position go unchecked. As such, our requests of you are simple:

- First, we ask that you fully recognize that the future community recovery from COVID-19 is dependent on all parts of the economy working together in a predictable and cohesive manner and that market disruption and destabilization by “payment boycotts or rent strikes” are counter-productive and will only prolong economic suffering.
- Second, we ask that you use your official elected position to bridge the gap between tenants and property owners by working with all parties to find reasonable and predictable rent repayment processes instead of calling for further disruptions and creating barriers for collaboration by tone and action during these difficult times for all.
- Finally, we ask that you join us to build coalitions through the mutual understanding of the problems and challenges throughout the community and that you seek collaboration over confrontation by advocating a higher level of political discourse that allows the community to heal instead of arguing that it is “us” against “them”.

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Ultimately, creating and sustaining adequate and affordable housing and growing a vibrant community cannot be done without private sector participation through property ownership, management, and investment. No private corporation or citizen, in turn, can reasonably be expected to invest in property development, ownership, and management in the community in exchange for zero profit or return.

Finally, responsible and empathetic leadership in the eyes of all the community counts during times of crisis. Your post and position reflects the worst of the current politics of division, which in our opinion will never work to unite and lead our community out of the deepest crisis it has faced since the Great Depression.

As an elected leader on the Olympia City Council, we expect that you will find a way to solve problems and challenges for all members of the community. We are here to work with you to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,



Michael Cade
Executive Director
Thurston Economic Development Council



David Schaffert
President and CEO
Thurston County Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Board of Directors, Thurston Economic Development Council
Board of Trustees, Thurston County Chamber of Commerce
Olympia City Council