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COUNTY OF PARK
Board of County
Commissioners



February 18, 2021

Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

RE: Park County COVID-19 Response

Dear Executive Director Ryan:

The Pandemic and the shutdown of our business has caused a great deal of hardship for our small businesses. We appreciate the attempt of making things more flexible with Dial 2.0, but we still have concerns using a one size fits all on a county such as ours.

Every county will tell you they are unique. Park County fits that because 80% of our people who work do so outside the county. We have no large industries. The School Districts and Park County Government are the largest employers in the county. Almost all of our business are small sole proprietorships, with only a few employees. Our restaurants are not the large venues you will see in the metro areas, and range from very small to small facilities.

In that most of the people who live in Park County work outside the county, our businesses rely on tourism and weekend business to keep them viable. Running a restaurant at 50% of capacity puts most of them in a position of losing money, especially when weekday business is very limited.

No one knows Park County Businesses and people better than our Board of County Commissioners and our local health department. We feel we are in a better position to judge what would be safe for our county. Working with our health department we feel we can develop a sound community focused plan to start opening up our business.

Some of the data that is currently being used punishes small counties such as ours. To place us in yellow if we have just one hospitalization in the last two weeks makes it almost impossible to improve our numbers. If one person contracts COVID at work in the Denver area or in Breckenridge, returns home, and then needs hospitalization it impacts our numbers, but there is absolutely nothing we as a county can do to prevent it.

I feel most of our cases originate outside our county, with very little transmission within the county. If we as a county had the ability to work with our businesses on their best practices, with them knowing that in so doing they would have an impact on our ability to open, I think we would have a much better outcome for our businesses and we would get some of our people back to work. They get very discouraged when they are doing everything they can, but cases originating outside our county don't allow us to open.

I request that we open a dialog that might lead us to allowing our businesses and their employees to get back to work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "RE", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard Elsner, Chairman

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