



News from Livingston County, NY

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Board of Supervisors Calls on Governor to Reopen Livingston County Economy

Geneseo, NY, June 9, 2020 — On June 8, 2020, the Livingston County Board of Supervisors sent a letter to Governor Cuomo imploring him to immediately advance Livingston County to Phase 3 of the reopening process, as all health metrics are currently being met.

Livingston County Board of Supervisors Chairman David L. LeFeber stated, “We found out that Phase 3 guidelines were issued today. That's good news. Now, we need Phase 3 to be greenlighted today as well. There is no excuse not to open up. The two week timeframe is now immaterial. All the trends and health metrics warrant Livingston County opening up more of our shuttered businesses to customers, traffic, business income and sales tax.”

Per Governor Cuomo’s phased-in approach to the gradual lifting of the State's “NY Pause” Executive Orders, the earliest he intends to open to Phase 3 is Friday, June 12, 2020. However, that is not guaranteed.

“It is likely that Phase 3 will be triggered on Friday,” continued LeFeber. “That’s to be expected. But, let's be honest and let's have public health benchmarks guide the decision-making and nothing else. There is no need to wait. Open now.”

The Board’s letter to Governor Cuomo also demands that Phase 4 guidelines – for arts, entertainment, recreation, and education – be issued this week so that businesses can plan ahead.

LeFeber stated, "We are proud of our Livingston County business owners for enduring the hardships brought about by these unprecedented times. They have been extremely patient over the last several months, and now, they are eager to get back to work in a safe and sensible manner. Reopening our businesses will help the local economy thrive once again."

"Our businesses are eager and anxious to continue the reopening process and, after this extensive layoff, they remain ready to further promote this recovery effort and fully reopen Livingston County," concluded LeFeber.



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David L. LeFeber
Chairman of the Board
Michele R. Rees, IMC-CMC
Clerk of the Board

June 8, 2020

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NY State Capital Building
Albany, New York 12224

RE: Reopening Livingston County

Governor Cuomo,

The businesses of Livingston County have done an incredible job of persevering during this pandemic.

They have been adaptive to the new normal, supportive of fellow business-owners, and understanding of an ever-changing logistical landscape as it relates to health protocols and reopening guidance.

Along the way, the State has sent a series of mixed messages, which has led to much confusion and frustration in our community. Some days businesses were slated to open, some days they were told they could not. Big box businesses were initially favored over "mom and pop" Main Street stores. Some sectors were in Phase 2, then pushed to Phase 3, and then allowed to ultimately open in Phase 2. The list goes on and on of communication challenges. We do realize, as you previously articulated, you are "building the plane as you fly it."

Additionally, there is an issue lately of credibility. As it stands right now, the First Amendment only partially applies to some large-scale gatherings we see in this State. Peaceful, group protests (which we support) are allowed under what we assume to be an exemption related to freedom of speech and/or freedom to assemble. Yet freedom to assemble for other purposes, even when socially distant and at a reduced density is evidently still disallowed.

At a special meeting convened last Thursday, the Livingston County Board of Supervisors authorized via unanimous vote to send this message to Albany.

We are an autonomous County. We take our cues from the constituents of our seventeen towns. We understand that the technical authority on executive orders rests with you Governor Cuomo. We

respect your position, your powers and your authority. That being said, we have lost respect for this process, the methodology, and the approach. We cannot sit idle as the haphazard application of phase transitions continues to negatively impact our business owners and constituents.

The Board is supportive of Phase 3 commencing immediately, provided the health metrics continue to be met. We also request that the guidelines for Phase 4 be issued this week so those industries can get the requisite heads up to ramp up their individual re-openings. The less than twenty-four hours notice provided in the Phase 1 and 2 transitions was simply unfair and impractical. We have urged the business community to use discretion and caution and have stressed adherence to strict health, safety and sanitation protocols. We are here, as we have been through this pandemic, to assist these business owners with PPE needs and questions on best practices, social distancing and mask-wearing.

Our position is grounded in science, in facts and in public health data. We hope that the community understands that we would never play politics with the health of the community. Nothing about this statement is reckless or cavalier. Our decision-making is measured, modest and rational.

As elected, local leaders we have certain powers and certain powers are vested with New York State. You as Governor through Executive Order can open and close elements of the economy. We are not challenging those powers. But full adherence, cooperation and unequivocal allegiance are not requirements in our job descriptions for Town Supervisors. We will not continue to play middle-man for the State's messaging morass.

Instead, we will focus on the future. We are turning the corner in this County and the people must stay both vigilant and positive to ensure the efforts made to-date have not been made in vain. We will focus on the health of our residents through daily contacts with our core administrative team, our Health Director and continue to provide regular and timely updates to our public through press releases, social media and virtual town halls.

Governor, on behalf of the business owners of this county, we implore you to move Livingston County to the next phase of the reopening process. Our numbers dictate this move, and the move by any objective standard, is medically warranted. We trust and respect our business community partners and know that they will be considerate and careful in their reopening process.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of David L. LeFeber in cursive.

David L. LeFeber
Chairman

DL/mrr

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