



Loudoun County, Virginia

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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

1 Harrison Street, S.E., MSC #01, 5th Floor, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000

May 13, 2020

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor Northam,

My colleagues and I are writing to you as individual members of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. As a bipartisan request – one of us is a Democrat, two are Republicans – we ask you to amend your Executive Order 62, which currently prevents Loudoun County from beginning Phase One of your Forward Virginia plan until May 28, to allow the westernmost districts of Loudoun County to start reopening as soon as possible prior to that date. Although we desired to have the entire County reopen under Phase One, our specific districts merit a different solution for the reasons discussed below.

The Leesburg, Catoctin, and Blue Ridge Districts are west of Route 15 and north of Goose Creek. The Catoctin and Blue Ridge Districts are largely rural and the Leesburg District has a high percentage of lower- and middle-income workers who have been without any income for two months and desperately need and want to go back to work.

These districts are distinct from Eastern Loudoun, and represent all of Loudoun's incorporated towns. The number of COVID-19 cases in our districts, which comprise the majority of the land mass of Loudoun County (see attached map), is minimal. The Virginia Department of Health currently reports that the Catoctin, Blue Ridge, and Leesburg Districts have only 378 total COVID-19 cases among the entirety of our districts. That means that these three districts account for less than 30% of the County's total COVID-19 cases.

The letter you recently received, which asked you to delay reopening Loudoun County, confusingly aggregated Loudoun's data with that of Fairfax, Prince William, Arlington, and the City of Alexandria. Loudoun County is in a stronger position to weather the COVID-19 pandemic than much of Northern Virginia. Our residents have been diligently abiding by the quarantine rules. During March 21 – May 2, Google's COVID-19 Community Mobility Report for Loudoun showed substantial declines in travel to work, retail, recreation, and transit locations. We also have a smaller, more dispersed population. As a result, out of a population of around 400,000, we have 1,283 cases, 129 hospitalizations, and a per capita COVID-19 death rate of 9.2 per 100,000 people. As previously stated, of these Countywide totals for Loudoun, only 378 cases have occurred in the areas west of Route 15 and North of Goose Creek. This number simply does not justify inclusion of western Loudoun with the much denser and more heavily impacted counties such as Fairfax and Arlington.

What our residents need most right now is to be allowed to restart their jobs and their small businesses. Last night, Loudoun's Executive Director of Economic Development reported that 25% of our small businesses may be lost. That number will increase each day we are closed. Our local and rural businesses, most of which have fewer than three employees, form the backbone of Loudoun's economy. They have already weathered severe disruptions, and now they are dangerously close to collapsing. And too many of our residents are ineligible to work from home, have insufficient broadband connectivity, and no resources to pay their bills.

Loudoun is in a strong position medically, and a dangerously fragile position economically. Please let us start Phase One now. It is time for us to start taking small, careful steps toward restarting our economy. We need to give our residents and local businesses a fighting chance to rescue their livelihoods.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Caleb Kershner, Catoctin District Supervisor
Tony Buffington, Blue Ridge District Supervisor
Kristen Umstattd, Leesburg District Supervisor