

To: Governor Inslee

From: Whatcom County Council

Date:

Re: Re Opening Whatcom County

We will make this short and to the point as we are sure you are receiving an abundance of correspondence these days. Let us start out by saying the Stay Home Stay Healthy initiative was a very appropriate and necessary action and we applaud your timely and thoughtful action, with that being said we would like to respectfully ask that you take the same timely and thoughtful approach to re-opening with an emphasis on timely. While we have been focused and successful on limiting the negative health effects of Covid-19 we also don't want to create other crises by having a singular focus while we implement our recovery plans. The negative health effects of a failing economy are very well documented so we will spare you the time in quoting them here. We would also ask that we set attainable goals to move through stages with an acknowledgment that no new cases was never the goal of flattening the curve and to not use this as a benchmark for re opening. Furthermore please do not use unrelated criteria in your reopening plans as you have eluded to in certain interviews.

Attached is a copy of an ordinance we tried to pass pertaining to opening businesses in Whatcom County. While it was generally regarded by our council that the spirit of the ordinance was in the right place and the thought process was sound, we did not pass this ordinance out of concern that we would be violating your current order. We would like you to consider, as the legislative body for Whatcom County there is a certain expectation from our constituents that we will lead our citizens through this process. However, your current order grants us very little leeway in doing the job that is expected of us. Which leaves us in the position of losing the "consent of the governed" in which we derive our power, as they perceive our inability to act, as not fulfilling our elected duties. Moving forward we would like you to consider modifying your order to allow County Governments which have well established Health departments, Administrations and functional legislative bodies to be more "in control" of their own futures as we re open. Just as is acknowledge with the growth management act, local control and planning is very beneficial as each County has its own strengths and unique challenges. We believe these challenges can be best met by granting local governments more leeway in determining their future. Please consider an option for Counties to deviate from your reopening phases without a burdensome "ask permission step" as long as we can document a thoughtful process and appropriate mitigation factors that pertain to the Covid-19 emergency. Respectfully, Whatcom County Council.