

Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
via email

RE: Businesses Still Closed in Chester County

Dear Governor Wolf:

On behalf of the nine Chambers of Commerce working together as the Chamber Alliance of Chester County, we write to request an in-person meeting with you to discuss the plight of thousands of businesses that remain closed during the yellow phased reopening.

We have entered the fifteenth week since the initial executive order closing businesses across our Commonwealth. The facts, hard data, and our collective understanding of this virus and necessary safety protocols have progressed greatly since that time. The overwhelming majority of the businesses still closed in our County are small businesses; many family-owned.

To the extent they had savings, those monies are gone. To the extent any were able to secure state or federal loans or grants, those dollars have been spent. There are businesses that were forced to remain closed and will never re-open. Each day we learn of yet another business facing permanent closure, and we, as advocates for more than 4,000 businesses across the County, are doing all we can, through support, connectedness and education, to help keep the rest open. The only way to ensure that they can be saved is to allow them to reopen—safely, and now.

Our request is not based solely on the economic crisis, although that is a strong and legitimate justification. Aside from the fact that thousands of jobs in our County alone are on the line, we know that the health data and established safety protocols support safe re-opening. Moreover, we know from the experience in our state, other states, and other nations such as New Zealand and Australia, that barber shops, hair salons, gyms, museums, and interior retail stores in malls can re-open; as can restaurants - and with necessary protocols, such as adjusted seating.

The CDC and the Commonwealth's Department of Health have issued clear guidance for all businesses. It is time to trust the remaining businesses to open and operate safely. We have the PPE materials. We have the test kits. We have guidance and experience. It is time to grant them the same status as everyone else.

Our request, our plea, need not be about the red-yellow-green phases of reopening. As you have done in the past, you possess the authority to adjust the businesses that may operate in the yellow phase. If we trust Lowe's, if we trust Home Depot, if we trust Walmart, we can trust a family owned business. If we allow for 9 of 10 stores to be open in a strip-mall, we can trust the 10th, a hair salon. At this juncture, based on the experience of other businesses, there is no reason remaining that these categories referenced cannot re-open.

Therefore, as we have done on several occasions, we offer our partnership in supporting and working side by side with the remaining businesses, as we have done with all the other businesses during this time. We humbly request a meeting with you in the immediate future to share our deep concerns for these local small businesses and to discuss the plan to get them reopened immediately, and safely.

We look forward to your reply, and, we look forward to the opportunity to meet and work together to get our businesses reopened immediately and safely. Thousands of jobs are on the line. Thousands of families' well-being depends on it. Our quality of life depends on it, too.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Chester County Alliance of Chambers

Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry
Downingtown-Thorndale Regional Chamber of Commerce
Exton Region Chamber of Commerce
Great Valley Chamber of Commerce
Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce
Oxford Area Chamber of Commerce
Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce
Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce
Western Chester County Chamber of Commerce

cc: Chester County Commissioners
Chester County legislative delegation
PA Chamber of Business & Industry
NFIB, PA Chapter