



Letter to Governor Newsom

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

The following letter was sent, on behalf of the Mammoth Lakes Lodging Association, Mammoth Lakes Restaurant Association and the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce, to the offices of Governor Gavin Newsom on Wednesday, December 30. If you would like to make your voice heard concerning this letter, please see below.



The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

As we find ourselves amidst trying times of a global pandemic, our business community is suffering devastating economic challenges presented by your Stay at Home Order that went into effect on Dec. 6, 2020. In an effort to avoid further decimation of our local business sector, we offer this question: How can we support the viability of the business community while keeping our

community safe in the pandemic?

What we know:

- COVID-19 is a highly contagious and deadly disease.
- The most effective ways of stopping the transmission of this disease are mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing.
- The majority of the transmission of this disease is happening in homes as the result of gathering amongst members of multiple households.
- The business community of Mammoth Lakes and surrounding Mono County communities has worked diligently to follow all health mandates in order to keep our guests and employees as safe and healthy as possible.
- Prior to the California Stay at Home Order, Mono County was operating under the most restrictive “purple tier” in the California Blueprint for a Safer Economy.
- Mono County is a unique area that has been drawn into the “Southern California” region, as determined by the State of California.
- Upon releasing the California stay at home mandate, you noted that outdoor recreation would remain open in an effort to support the mental health of the state’s residents. Notable to the residents of Mono County, this means that Mammoth Mountain is able to continue operating, albeit under strict regulations.
- Mammoth Hospital remains in “Green” status, as it has throughout the pandemic. As of Monday, Dec. 21, there are zero patients currently admitted to Mammoth Hospital as a result of COVID-19. The hospitals to which we most often send our critical patients are in Northern Nevada, a region that is not under a stay-at-home order. Nevada’s lodging businesses are operating at 100 percent capacity and restaurants are operating at 25 percent capacity, with indoor dining available.

- As a result of the California Stay at Home Order, hundreds of Mono County workforce residents lost their jobs and thus sources of income. The holiday season is generally a time when our businesses and employees are at their busiest and economic gains are made that will allow both businesses and workforce members to survive the slower “shoulder season” in this **100 percent tourist-driven economy**.

What we are doing:

- The restaurant and lodging communities have invested great amounts of time and money to operate within health mandates. The workload under these mandates has been financially and physically burdensome, yet we continue to operate under these conditions in order to [#staysafetostayopen](#). We successfully navigated the busiest summer on record for the town of Mammoth Lakes (based on TOT revenue) without a spike in COVID-19 cases, as we began to see after the Halloween holiday.
- Employees that were, prior to the stay at home order, spending great amounts of time in businesses—where mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing are enforced—are now left with idle time. That time will likely be filled with gatherings and travel for visitations with members outside their immediate households.
- We are also highly concerned about the mental health of our workforce employees who face financial challenges and home challenges such as domestic violence and substance abuse. We seek to empower our employees by continuing their access to both financial income and meaningful workplace societal contribution.
- We are aware that local businesses, facing the choice between financial ruin and breaking mandates, have threatened to choose the latter. So that it is clear, the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce, the Mammoth Lakes Restaurant Association and the Mammoth Lakes

Lodging Association **DO NOT SUPPORT** disregarding health mandates, but we do feel a push coming from our industries and worry that it will soon become an issue.

- Given Mammoth Mountain Ski Area's location in the Eastern Sierra, approximately 300 miles from Los Angeles and surrounding communities, where most of our skiing visitors come from, we worry about the safety of these guests that are not being offered lodging opportunities. We feel that this has multiple repercussions, including weary travelers on Highway 395, neighboring counties disregarding mandates and allowing lodging, thus removing income and TOT revenues from Mono County, and illegal rental of private properties that will also result in lost TOT revenues.
- As the guiding bodies for two of the largest industries in Mono County, the Mammoth Lakes Restaurant Association and Mammoth Lakes Lodging Association support full compliance with local officials and the Mono County Health Department. We embrace each guidance under the purple tier mandate and would be open to discussion of further safety precautions. As an example, Northern Nevada requires reservations for dining and limits restaurants to four people per table.

What we are asking:

- We ask that you allow the regional stay at home order to expire as soon as possible (sometime during the week of December 27, 2020).
- We offer our hands, as allies, to continue to conduct our businesses safely in the purple tier. We will continue to operate, as we have done since the start of the pandemic, with the safety of our guests and employees as our utmost concern.
- While we appreciate efforts, both local and at the state level, to financially support businesses through programs such as the Mammoth Lakes Business Assistance Program, the Mono County Business

Assistance Program and the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program. However, these allocated funds are not sufficient to continue to operate long term under the Stay at Home Order. We should be operating safely through natural cashflow rather than relying on public funding.

- Finally, we request that you allow us to redraw the regional boundaries, removing Mono County from the Southern California region. Regulating a county of approximately 14,000 residents in 3,030 square miles based on the actions of counties that are home to over 10 million people in a slightly larger area is unjust and unreasonable. Mono County should be placed in a region appropriate to its demographics. We would recommend a region consisting of the following counties: Inyo, Mono and Alpine. All of these county's ICU capacities are reliant on the Reno, Carson City and Gardnerville/Minden, NV hospitals.

We stand ready to follow through on our commitments to operate in all confines of the purple tier until we can derive the numbers necessary to achieve the red or orange tier. We are committed to protecting our employees, our guests, and our community by following the tenets of [#staysafetostayopen](#).

Respectfully,

The Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce
The Mammoth Lakes Restaurant Association
The Mammoth Lakes Lodging Association

cc: Senator Andreas Borgeas
Assemblyman Frank Bigelow
Town of Mammoth Lakes Council & Staff
Mono County Board of Supervisors & Staff

