



## Sussex County Chamber of Commerce

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May 9, 2020

Governor Phil Murphy  
225 W State Street  
Trenton, N.J. 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

Recently I sent you a letter encouraging you to begin opening business in N.J. I want to clarify why I believe opening now, in stages, is important and to reassure you that safety will be a primary focus as we believe it is also a community responsibility.

During this time of unprecedented uncertainty, all of us here at the Chamber are concerned about the safety and well-being of our families, colleagues, customers, and businesses in Sussex County and throughout the state. Our hearts go out to those who have been affected personally by the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) as well as the many communities and organizations across the county that are facing extreme measures in the attempt to slow its spread.

Recently I sent a call to action asking our businesses to send a letter asking you to begin opening business in stages now. I also asked that when these businesses begin to open that they help to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfecting. As you are aware, it will be an important part of reopening of businesses and public spaces and will require careful planning. I strongly encouraged any businesses that open to help to slow the spread of the virus through best practice and scientific protocols including social distancing and prevention hygiene, such as frequently washing hands, utilizing gloves, wearing face coverings and other precautions. I also stressed that it is incumbent upon all of us to keep our communities as safe as possible as we reopen and wish to remain open.

My reason for sending the initial letter to you was to ask to begin opening up business because many of our small businesses are struggling and fearful of closure and I believe needlessly. As you know, essential businesses such as restaurants, liquor stores, pet stores, home improvement stores and more were able to open & provide curbside pickup, delivery and more. However, there are many other businesses that could offer the same curbside pickup and delivery that have been ordered closed and unable to do the same. There are also businesses that could provide drive thru or drive up services that have also been told they are unable to open and there are others that could also provide product or service in a safe manner, with limited human contact, that are not allowed at this time. I believe we need to start to open businesses now, in stage and with safety protocols, as we continue to battle this virus and flatten the curve.

Recently we conducted a COVID-19 survey of Sussex County businesses which reflected the fact that 91% of our businesses have had a direct or indirect negative impact since the pandemic began and that almost 50% have not been able to shift to a virtual working environment. Over 65% of those businesses who responded to the survey have also not received any financial assistance because they either didn't qualify financially, were too new to qualify, the funds were gone before their application was accepted or they were lost in the system.

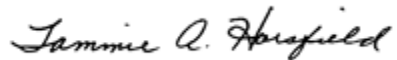
I am deeply concerned about the welfare of our economy. Recently in an article posted on a national news feed and written by a well-known marketing research firm, Sussex County was listed at the top (#1) on the list of vulnerable and hardest hit real estate markets in the nation due to the coronavirus.

The Chamber is trying to balance health and safety while providing some of our businesses an opportunity to survive and provide product and service in a safe way. We are not thinking in a vacuum. We need both good health and a healthy economy. This is why I asked for this call to action.

Thank you for your efforts to keep the people of our state healthy. I however ask you now to consider opening those businesses that can do so safely as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Stay well and enjoy your weekend.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tammie A. Horsfield".

Tammie A. Horsfield, President  
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