



May 26, 2020

Via Email

The Honorable Supervisor Janice Hahn
Los Angeles County 4th District Office
302 W. 5th Street, #200
San Pedro, CA 90731

SUBJECT: Palos Verdes Peninsula Reopening Blueprint for Businesses - Request to Allow Peninsula Businesses to Open

Honorable Supervisor Hahn:

The four cities of the Palos Verdes Peninsula greatly appreciate and commend your leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and your commitment to protecting the well-being of your constituents. We are pleased to hear that on Memorial Day, the Governor announced that all retail will be able to reopen with safety protocols subject to County approval. It is our belief that your letter and efforts urging Governor Newsom to allow retail businesses statewide to reopen under the same health protocols that essential retail businesses have been allowed to operate under helped influence his announcement. And now we need you to tell the L.A. County Public Health Officials that it's time to reopen our County's economy.

As a patron of our businesses on the Peninsula, you know firsthand how difficult the stay-at-home orders have been on our business community, which is primarily comprised of independent and mom-and-pop retail outlets. It is common knowledge now that many of these businesses may not be able to sustain limited operations for much longer. We are urgently writing to you because business owners in every sector on the Peninsula and throughout the South Bay region need your immediate help. Businesses are reeling from the devastating impacts of this unprecedented health crisis. Many of our businesses have found themselves facing great uncertainty and agonizing choices, unsure if they will ever recover from the significant losses in income with each day that they are partially or fully closed. Limiting our businesses is unsustainable and will result in rising business closures and job losses, not to mention adversely impacting our city budgets.

Given the size and diversity of Los Angeles, it is not surprising that the impact of COVID-19 has differed across the County. While Los Angeles County has entered Stage 2 of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Recovery Framework, there are areas within the County that are less affected by the pandemic, such as the South Bay as a region, and the Palos Verdes Peninsula in particular. If the Peninsula and the other South Bay cities can demonstrate an ability to protect the public and essential workers, we should be allowed to forge ahead into the less restrictive aspects of Stage 3. A similar variance concept has already

been authorized at the State level for counties that are able to attest that they are able to protect the public and essential workers. We support your motion on the May 26 Board of Supervisors Agenda to actively explore obtaining such a variance approach from the Governor so that reopening may occur city-by-city rather than subjecting the entire region to the same rules.

On May 19, the four Peninsula cities submitted for your review a reopening plan for Peninsula businesses, titled the *Peninsula Reopening Blueprint for Businesses*, which was developed in partnership with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. The plan outlines physical distancing and safeguard protocols for various business sectors that would implement the required industry safety protocols to ensure employees and customers are protected. On May 21, your Chief of Staff Nick Ippolito provided us with appreciated suggestions on how to enhance our reopening plan. We were also pleased to hear that the Department of Public Health has reviewed our plan and will be providing us with more feedback under a separate email, which we have yet to receive. We appreciate your efforts in coordinating tomorrow's call between our City Managers and Mayors and Mr. Ippolito and some of your key staff on the economic task force you organized. It is our intent to request that the specific timeframes cited in our plan for reopening all of our business sectors is one that is achievable with appropriate safeguards and monitoring.

According to the most recent available data from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the Palos Verdes Peninsula has seen only 143 confirmed COVID-19 cases out of a population of about 65,000 residents. This equates to 0.22% of the Peninsula's population. The Palos Verdes Peninsula falls under the South Region of L.A. County EMS reporting area for hospital availability. Over the past two weeks, the South Region hospitals have had an average of 245 beds available for surge and also maintained an average of 45 ICU beds over the past 14 days. The South Bay can accommodate a minimum surge of 35% due to COVID-19 patients within the existing infrastructure. In addition, hospital facilities have robust plans to protect hospital workers, both clinical and non-clinical with PPE while simultaneously maintaining plans to grow surge capacity, if needed. All four Peninsula cities continue to maintain an emergency operations plan, which includes pandemic as a potential hazard.

We recognize the role social distancing has played in preventing our case count from being far higher, but we fear that limiting our businesses and waiting to allow them to safely reopen will worsen the economic health crisis created by this pandemic. As elected officials, we are contacted several times a day by our business community with reopening plans that provide safeguard measures that seem reasonable and responsible. Moreover, the Peninsula cities are exploring the "open street" concept, similar to other cities in the County, by issuing temporary permits to allow businesses to move their operations outside onto patios or on-site parking spaces.

Our businesses are ready to implement the required industry safety protocols to ensure employees and customers are protected. Please act now to allow them to fully reopen while following State and County safety protocols.

For these reasons, the Palos Verdes Peninsula cities are prepared for movement into the less restrictive portions of the Los Angeles County Public Health Recovery Framework. **We respectfully request that the County of Los Angeles, along with the State of California, allow businesses throughout the South Bay to open within the Phase 3 guidelines while following the State and County safety protocols.**

Thank you for your support and commitment to stand with your local businesses. We would appreciate an opportunity to continue discussing our reopening plan with you.

Sincerely,



John Cruikshank
Mayor, Rancho Palos Verdes



Velveth Schmitz
Mayor, Rolling Hills Estates



David McGowan
Mayor, Palos Verdes Estates



Jeff Pieper
Mayor, Rolling Hills

cc: Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California
Ben Allen, Senator, 26th Senate District
Al Muratsuchi, Assembly Member, 66th Assembly District
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
South Bay City Councils