

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

We are writing on behalf of the Howell Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Area Brighton Chamber of Commerce, Hartland Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Livingston County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Our organizations collectively represent thousands of businesses in Livingston County. We are pleased with the efforts and progress we as a state have made to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Looking forward, we are hopeful that brighter days lie ahead as we plan to reopen our Michigan economy carefully and safely. We have embraced the concept of regional differentiation as part of the State of Michigan's plan to safely reopen the state and its businesses.

Our organizations are writing with concerns regarding the designation of Livingston County as part of the Detroit region in the MI Safe Start Plan. Our organizations have reviewed the MI Safe Start Plan and the proposed regions by the Michigan Economic Recovery Council in great detail. We are writing to request reconsideration regarding Livingston County's inclusion as part of the nine-county Detroit Region. It is our position that as we work towards safely reopening the economy that Livingston County would be more appropriately designated as part of the Lansing Region. Our position is based upon a review of both the medical data available and the MI Safe Start Plan.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Livingston County has not been nearly as high as the other counties in the Detroit Region. The following is the data that was found on the state website (michigan.gov/coronavirus/) as of May 19, 2020 that our organizations have relied upon to form our position:

- 1) Livingston County had 385 confirmed cases of the virus.
- 2) Wayne County had 19,292 confirmed cases of the virus.
- 3) Oakland County had 8,078 confirmed cases of the virus.
- 4) Macomb County had 6,367 confirmed cases of the virus.

The MI Safe Start Plan provides for six stages to safely re-open the economy. Based on Livingston County's continuous reporting of low numbers of confirmed cases in comparison to the surrounding counties it is evident that Livingston County is incredibly likely to move from stage three to stages four and five more quickly than the counties listed in the Detroit Region and in a fashion like the Lansing Region. The following is the data for Livingston County and Ingham County as of May 19, 2020:

- 1) Livingston County had 385 confirmed cases of the virus.
- 2) Ingham County had 650 confirmed cases of the virus

In addition to the COVID-19 reporting numbers, it is our position that the Michigan Emergency Preparedness regions would be more appropriate for classification of regions rather than the Michigan Economic Recovery Council Reporting Regions. Historically, the Emergency Preparedness regions developed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services have included Livingston County in the Lansing Region rather than in the Detroit Region. Furthermore, our county has historically not been included in a Detroit Region under Michigan Works! Talent districts, or Community Mental Health Partnership regions.

After reviewing this information and the data available, our organizations have determined that from a health and risk standpoint that Livingston County's status of confirmed cases and continued low reporting of the virus in the county requires that our county be classified as part of the Lansing Region when determining when to begin re-engaging our local businesses.

The number of cases in our county align much closer with those counties in the Lansing Region and our county is prepared to re-engage the local businesses when appropriate based on the Lansing Region's status in the six-phase process. We understand that throughout the development of this plan you have been and continue to use data and facts as a guide to drive plans forward to reopen our state. We ask that you seriously consider the data and position we have presented and respectfully request that the state seriously considers making an adjustment in the reporting regions to move Livingston County into the Lansing Region of the MI Safe Start plan. Thank you for your consideration of our request on behalf of our organizations and their membership.



Janelle Best, IOM
President
Howell Area Chamber of Commerce



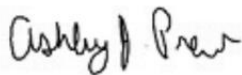
Katie Chuba
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