



PENNSYLVANIA LICENSED BEVERAGE & TAVERN ASSOCIATION

To: Dr. Debra Bogen, Allegheny County Health Department
Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive
From: Curtis Mason, President, Pa. Licensed Beverage & Tavern Association
Date: June 29, 2020

As we walk the COVID-19 tightrope trying to balance the health of individuals and the health of businesses, the Pennsylvania Licensed Beverage and Tavern Association has strongly supported efforts to limit community spread of the virus. We have promoted the state's programs for mitigation, including wearing of masks, social distancing, hand washing and other common sense activities – at times to the frustration of our members. Pennsylvania's bars, taverns and restaurants have been, more than any other segment of the population, impacted economically by the state response through closures of their businesses.

We find the recent decision to halt the sale of adult beverages for on-site consumption at licensed restaurants to be an overly broad brush stroke that punishes law-abiding licensed restaurant owners, employees, and patrons who have followed guidance provided by both state and local officials. They shouldn't be punished because of the actions of a few "bad actors."

With "no known cause," targeting one segment of a complicated economy – and one service provided by that segment – appears arbitrary and penal to the huge majority of well-intentioned restaurants, bars and taverns. In recent weeks, Pittsburgh has had riots and protests that likely contributed to increased COVID-19 cases. Travel to summer vacation spots that have turned into COVID-19 hot spots has also been cited as problematic. Furthermore, many Pennsylvanians have chosen not to wear masks, whether they are pumping gas at a convenience store, picking up groceries, or shopping for items at big box stores in which thousands of Pennsylvanians visit daily.

Instead, enforcement of those guidelines at all businesses and public locations would have been the better option if Allegheny County truly is concerned for its citizens. Failure of government to enforce these guidelines should not be the justification for closing businesses that are supporting mitigation efforts through thorough compliance with guidelines.

The Pennsylvania Licensed Beverage and Tavern Association fully supports reasonable science-based efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 while reopening state and local economies. We will continue to educate our Members in enacting safe practices, and will encourage all to follow recommended guidance. Please note that

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we do not have an issue with state enforcement against the few bad apples within the hospitality industry.

But, broad brush strokes targeting everyone within the industry is a death sentence in itself to many of our family-owned businesses and the jobs they create. For that reason, we ask for your support to reconsider your approach, to maintain a true balance between the risks to the health of individuals and the risks to the lifeblood of our member businesses.

The Pennsylvania Licensed Beverage & Tavern Association stands ready to meet with you and work with you to maximize the impact of following guidance, and to the successful reopening of our members' businesses while maintaining an effective disincentive to those who ignore or intentionally flaunt their opposition to common sense, data-driven rules for mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 virus.

Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Governor Tom Wolf
Dr. Rachel Levine
PLCB Commissioners
State Senators, Allegheny County
State Representatives, Allegheny County

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