

November 25, 2020

Governor Jared Polis
State of Colorado
Via Email

Governor Polis,

The Board of Douglas County Commissioners writes to express appreciation for the Governor's willingness to allow Mesa County to continue their 5-Star Variance Protection Program. We encourage you to allow additional counties, including Douglas County, to utilize a similar program. We understand you believe the Mesa County 5-Star Program can serve as a state model. We agree and note that many restaurants in our community are already following the eight requirements outlined or can make small adaptations to come into compliance. It remains our priority to protect public health with strong, data-driven recommendations. However, both lives and livelihoods are at stake.

We are writing to advocate for the fair treatment of restaurants during this critical time of year. Restaurants are being unfairly penalized by the Level Red restrictions which include prohibition on indoor dining. We are concerned that the appearance of the State selecting winners and losers will promote instability within the restaurant business sector and inhibit the path to recovery.

We have received numerous communications from our restaurant owners expressing desperation about the impact of current restrictions and questioning their ability to remain open. We, therefore, are respectfully requesting the County be able to immediately implement a Variance Protection Program allowing local control of local counties and public health departments. Allowing Douglas County, along with other interested counties, the ability to implement this program will provide a wider path to our small businesses in their continuing quest to remain solvent, provide residents with services they request, provide employees of restaurants and supporting industries with badly needed income and help offset the numerous unintended consequences that are seriously affecting an untold number of lives. We are concerned about the long-term social and economic toll that will occur if these businesses are unable to operate at even limited capacity.

We the undersigned respectfully request confirmation of receipt of this letter and we would appreciate your willingness to engage in conversation at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration and willingness to find ways to meet the challenges we face due to COVID-19. If we don't hear from you by December 4, 2020, we will proceed with implementation of our Douglas County Variance Protection Program.



Abe Laydon
Commissioner District I



Roger A. Partridge
Commissioner District II



Lora L. Thomas
Commissioner District III

cc: Director Jill Hunsacker Ryan, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Dr. John Douglas, Tri-County Health Department