

COUNTY OF SONOMA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 18, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Sonia Y. Angell, MD  
California Department of Public Health  
Director State Health Officer  
P.O. Box 997377 MS 0500  
Sacramento, CA 95899

The Honorable Mark Ghaly, MD  
Secretary, CA Health & Human Services Agency  
1600 Ninth Street, Room 460  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom, Secretary Ghaly, and Dr. Angell:

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, I am writing in appreciation and support of the swift actions taken by Sonoma County's Public Health Officer and the diligence of our community positioning Sonoma County to progress further into Stage 2 of California's Pandemic Resilience Roadmap. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors strongly supports Public Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase's attestation of Sonoma County's readiness to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) under the CDPH's Guidance to Counties for Variance to Stage 2 of California's Roadmap to Modify the Stay-at-Home Order.

On March 17, 2020, Dr. Mase issued a Shelter-in-Place Order (County Order) – two days before the State's Stay-at-Home Order (State Order) – when Sonoma County had only four positive COVID-19 cases. Not only was County Order more restrictive than the State Order, additional actions were taken beyond those required by the State, including:

- Order Closing Parks
- Blanket Quarantine and Isolation Orders
- Mandatory Facial Coverings Order
- Orders Setting Requirements for Congregate Care and Living Facilities and First Responders

Due to these quick actions by Dr. Mase and the broad compliance of our community, we were successful in substantially flattening the curve. Indeed, initial modeling showed the need for 1,500 hospital beds to meet the projected surge; however, due to the actions taken in our County, updated modeling shows a much less significant surge with only 600-1,000 beds needed. The County is well positioned to meet this need.

Early on, the County launched an aggressive surveillance testing program and took other actions to protect our most vulnerable communities – from older adults and residential care facilities to our unsheltered population. While every death is tragic and unacceptable, due to these actions, we have had only four COVID-19 related deaths in our County. Working with the State and local partners, we established alternate care (ACS) and non-congregate shelter (NCS) sites at Sonoma State University, as well as other non-congregate shelter using State-provided trailers, allowing us to provide housing to our most vulnerable while taking bed capacity pressure off of our hospitals.

In addition to flattening the curve, the County also significantly increased its testing capacity over the last several weeks. Although this ramping up of testing since May 5<sup>th</sup> has increased the number of positive results (as would be expected), the percentage rate of positive results has remained stable between 3-4%. Importantly, the vast majority of positive cases (77%) over the past 14 days were among close contacts of positive cases who were identified through contract tracing demonstrating both the low amount of community transmission and the success of our aggressive contact tracing program. Through partnership with the State, local non-profit organizations, and community members, the County's contact tracing program continues to grow.

Given our expanded testing capacity and contact tracing program, along with our ACS/NCS sites, we are confident that the County's has the infrastructure, processes, and resources to reliably detect and isolate new cases and to quickly impose any needed restrictions if data suggests community transmission is increasing or hospital capacity is threatened.

Recognizing the incredible sacrifices by our local business to protect our community, the County is also helping to address the pandemic's crippling economic impacts. Our Economic Development Board has built on the Governor's guidances with additional industry specific best management practices (BMPs) and is helping procure and distribute critical supplies to allow business to reopen while protecting workers and the community. In addition, working with IBM, the County has developed a free smart phone COVID-19 symptom self-assessment application for employers to use.

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors support the need to protect vulnerable populations, continue social distancing, and monitor indicators that may trigger the need to reinstate more restrictive measures. At the same time, it is important to find a balance that allows for some businesses to reopen while also protecting the community's health. We believe Sonoma County's plan to proceed with a variance in order to allow more businesses and workplaces to open, with appropriate modifications and protocols, is in the best interest of our community. As a Board, we have full confidence in Dr. Mase and support the approach contained in the attestation as a better reflection of Sonoma County's progress in meeting this great challenge and readiness to carefully move further into Stage 2.

We greatly appreciate the State's partnership and thank you for the opportunity for counties to move at different paces through Stage 2 based on county-specific circumstances. We whole-heartedly support the variance request.

Sincerely,

Susan Gorin, Chair  
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Bill Dodd, California State Senate  
The Honorable Mike McGuire, California State Senate  
The Honorable Jim Wood, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Marc Levine, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, California State Assembly  
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors