



PASCACK VALLEY MAYORS' ASSOCIATION

October 16, 2020

Governor Phil Murphy
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: Expanding Indoor Dining

Dear Governor Murphy,

The Pascack Valley Mayor's Association would like to formally press an important issue that arose during your bi-weekly Governor's call on Tuesday Oct. 13, that is, allowing restaurants to seat diners indoors at 50% of room capacity.

Your administration has been sensitive to the plight of our restaurant owners and operators struggling under the CoVid 19 restrictions while balancing the safety of the public. Your Sept 4, 2020 decision opening interior restaurants to 25% capacity was most welcome. For our part, we Mayors had led our Governing Bodies to relax zoning restrictions so to expand outdoor dining footprints as safely as possible. These measures coupled with other tweaks designed to enhance takeout orders have been successful and beneficial to our constituents.

The limited indoor option provided the potential for additional seating to augment outdoor table service. Takeout and delivery service rounded out the consumer choices. Many restaurant operators have been able to tread water, on very thin margins, due to these efforts.

Still, some venues due to size, location, cuisine, or business model are necessarily more reliant upon indoor table service. They could not make the math (staffing and supply costs) work at 25%. Some have joined dozens of popular North Jersey restaurants forced to shutter permanently due to the pandemic.

With the onset of cooler weather outdoor dining has become more challenging and less tenable. Our Governing Bodies have further relaxed our local zoning codes to enable the installation of temporary heated structures where appropriate, are utilized consistent with your Executive Orders and are fire and construction code compliant. We'd hoped to allow vendors the opportunity to extend the outdoor season later into the Fall.

Propane heating, while inexpensive to operate, is, however, difficult to install in a code compliant manner. Electric heating requires additional dedicated circuits and is quite expensive

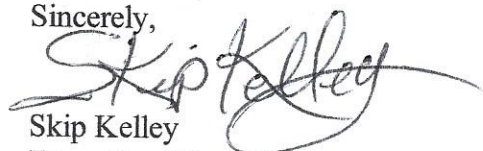
Representing the residents of Emerson, Hillsdale, Montvale, Old Tappan, Oradell, Park Ridge, River Vale, Washington Township, Westwood and Woodcliff Lake Since 1966.

to run. After months of depressed revenues and depleted savings, few vendors have been willing or able to absorb those costly expenditures.

Governor, our remaining restaurant owners and operators must be able to open their dining rooms to 50% capacity forthwith. We understand this may be counterintuitive with the CoVid 19 trends being reported. However, as you pointed out on October 8th, none of the cases involved in the State's current uptick have been traced back to indoor dining in restaurants.

Now, on the threshold of heating season, we cannot afford to lose more food businesses to the cold weather; or to competitors, just across the state line, who have been accommodating indoor diners at half capacity for the last four months.

Sincerely,



Skip Kelley
Executive Director

Pascack Valley Mayors' Association

Danielle DiPaola
Mayor, Emerson

John Ruocco
Mayor, Hillsdale

Michael Ghassali
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