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**To Whom It May Concern:**

In regard to the State Public Health Order issued by the Utah Department of Health on April 14, 2020, the Iron County Commission respectfully recommends that the Department exclude Iron County from any future extensions of the Order which is currently scheduled to expire on May 1, 2020.

We greatly appreciate the input of experts and professionals who help us make local decisions in the best interest of public health and safety. In the middle of March of this year, all restaurants statewide were ordered to cease dine-in operations and all public schools were closed when we had limited knowledge and testing. Many public amenities have also been closed by state and local governments in response. This response has undoubtedly saved lives along the Wasatch Front and across the state.

The realities of Iron County's rural location and relatively sparse population make it less vulnerable to the outcomes seen in more densely populated areas. As of April 22, 2020, there have only been 18 confirmed cases of COVID-19 out of a total population of approximately 55,000 residents. This infection rate is less than one-third of the rate in Salt Lake County and less than five percent of the infections per capita of Summit County. With only 5 of our 18 overall cases diagnosed since April 5 notwithstanding increased testing, our curve has not only flattened, but has been eliminated before it could start. Due to the substantial difference in impact between our community and more urban areas, we urge the Department to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

There is a high degree of confidence that the healthcare system in Iron County is adequately prepared to meet the demands of a potential spike in COVID-19 cases which may result from a measured reopening of local businesses. As stated in the Governor's "Stay Safe, Stay Home" directive (of which the April 14 Order is an expansion), one goal of this Order is to, "flatten the curve, reduce the strain on hospitals and the healthcare system, and minimize the impact on medical resources for those with highest need." Based on open communication between local leaders and stake holders in Iron County's healthcare system, there is a general consensus that local health care providers are prepared to address future, potential strain caused by COVID-19. There is broad agreement that thanks in part to the impact of State directives, local providers have had time to identify potential capacity concerns and implement measures that will satisfy forecasted demand.

Specifically, we need our restaurants to reopen dine-in services while implementing as many recommendations as practicable from the "Guidelines for Dine-in Restaurants Open in Orange/Moderate" found in the appendix of the Governor's "Utah Leads Together 2.0" plan for recovery. These guidelines include taking measures to disinfect dining areas and menus between guests and encouraging wait staff and other restaurant workers to wear facial masks to limit the spread of infection.

Time is of the essence in this matter, thus allowing our restaurant owners to be confident they can count on, and be assured that May 1st is the day for re-opening. Our local restaurant owners have indicated that they need at least 7-10 days to ramp up, ordering food, lining up employees and other critical planning. After enduring this difficult period, it would be devastating to them to extend the date once again leaving them stuck with costly inventory and further devastation to theirs, and their employees' finances.

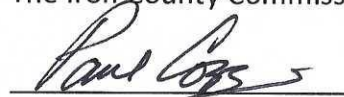
We encourage our citizens to act responsibly in reopening our economy. We urge all local businesses to adopt as many recommendations as are practicable from the "Utah Leads Together 2.0" plan for recovery. Likewise, we will encourage appropriate measures and precautions from the Governor's directives which can be implemented simultaneously with the reopening of businesses, storefronts and restaurants. We will also invite our citizens to assess personal risk from COVID-19 and to take precautions that are seen as necessary on an individual level up to and including self-quarantine.

Currently, it has been six weeks since our schools and restaurants closed and we are much better equipped to test for this virus and monitor its progress in our community. We look forward to antibody testing options as we remain open to the possibility that many in our community were infected in January and February before testing was available, due to healthcare worker reports of symptoms, winter tourism, and the return of many of our international students from winter break in then-affected areas.

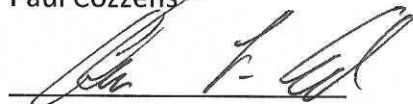
We appreciate the continued input of our local and regional experts as we tailor policies to the specific health and safety needs of our community. We thank our state leaders and ask for their support as we pursue local solutions in a careful and deliberate manner. Please exempt Iron County from future extensions of the State Public Health Order beyond May 1, 2020.

Guidelines for Dine-in Restaurants Open in Orange/Moderate found in the appendix of the Governor's "Utah Leads Together 2.0" plan for recovery available at <https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Governor/20200420%20Phased%20Guidelines.pdf>

Sincerely,  
The Iron County Commission



Paul Cozzens



Alma L. Adams



Michael P. Bleak