

VIRGINIA BEACH
VISION

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Northam:

Based on a strong consensus vote of Virginia Beach Vision's Board of Directors consisting of 120 senior business executives and community leaders in Virginia Beach, we encourage you to allow the reopening of the city's beaches no later than Memorial Day weekend with a soft-reopening beginning Saturday, May 16th.

Tourism is an economic engine in Virginia and most particularly for our coastal city. The industry's viability is dependent on a successful summer season. Should we fail to compete with neighboring beach locations for tourists this season, many of our visitor-based businesses will not survive.

Given the City's Beach Reopening Plan as submitted to you on May 1, we feel confident that the oceanfront can be reopened incrementally and safely. The Ambassador Program coupled with continued limitations on gatherings, strict physical distancing, parking limitations and enhanced cleaning of all public spaces, will allow for the safe access of our oceanfront beyond current limitations. Our restaurants and hoteliers have developed comprehensive guidelines for safely accommodating guests and have a strong incentive to "get it right" to ensure visitor and citizen safety.

Virginia Beach's public safety personnel have decades of experience in managing beach access and crowd control through such tools as limited, dispersed parking availability, ingress restrictions and venue restrictions. They are equipped to adjust quickly and safely should circumstances dictate the need.

It will be to all our detriment should the beaches and businesses reopen only to again be closed due to a significant rise in COVID-19 infections. We believe the City's reopening plan provides the framework and comprehensive approach to ensure that the potential for COVID-19 infections will be minimized.

We are grateful for your efforts to keep our citizens safe and realize those efforts must be ongoing. As time has passed, we have all had time to make more informed decisions and adjustments to current and future business operations. We look forward to the Commonwealth's entry into Phase One of the economic recovery and ask for your inclusion of our beaches in this first phase of limited reopening.

Respectfully,



President



Executive Director

Cc: Matthew J. Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources
The Honorable Robert J. Dyer, Mayor, City of Virginia Beach
Virginia Beach City Council members