



*Office of the Town Council*

Mayor Jason Gray  
Mayor Pro Tem Jason Bower  
Councilmember James Townsend  
Councilmember Kevin Bracken  
Councilmember Caryn Johnson  
Councilmember George Teal

November 25, 2020

Governor Jared Polis  
State Capitol Building  
200 E. Colfax Ave., Room 136,  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis,

I am writing on behalf of the Castle Rock Town Council, which authorized this letter on November 24, 2020, by a vote of \_\_\_-\_\_\_, to oppose the State's movement of Douglas County to Level Red on the updated COVID-19 Dial. Particularly, we take issue with the capacity restrictions on our struggling local restaurants and bars under this level, and request reconsideration of those restrictions.

We, and many of our local restaurants, are frustrated by the appearance that COVID Dial restrictions are not being applied fairly throughout the State based on the metrics. Data on the State COVID Dial website as of November 24 show Douglas County's two-week average positivity rate at 12%, or in the Orange range. Meanwhile, our neighbor Elbert County's comparable rate was 14.7%, and the rate in Teller County was 14.9% – both much closer to Red levels than our 12%. Like Douglas County, both of those neighboring counties have two-week cumulative incidence rates in the Red range and hospitalization reports in the Green range. Yet, they have not been moved to Level Red like we have. This unequal treatment gives the appearance that recent Dial moves are more politically motivated than data-based.

Further, we do not understand the rationale behind the updated Dial completely shutting down in-person dining under Level Red, while other indoor industries are allowed to operate with capacities of up to 50%. Our local restaurants have adhered to capacity restrictions, along with 6-foot distancing, face-covering, cleaning, party size and other requirements. It seems outright unfair to restrict their operations to a degree so much greater than all other industries. If the State has infection data that indicates this is necessary, we plead it be shared. We fear this industry – which has already experienced substantial revenue declines this year, without additionally missing sales in this critical holiday high season – cannot withstand such severe measures. Restaurants add charm, interest and vitality to our community, and each loss of a local business permanently alters Castle Rock's unique character. We hope the moves the State has made do not lead to that outcome.

Finally, we are frustrated that local government leaders within our county were not consulted in the development of the latest public health order. You said in your November 17 COVID update that the updated Dial is "a tool for Mayors and Commissioners and the State to work in tandem to minimize disruptions to the economy." Unfortunately, I was not given the chance to work with your team on solutions – nor were my fellow Town Councilmembers, nor any Mayors or Commissioners within Douglas County.

State officials' recent public comments have provided the impression that cities and counties are choosing to enter into the various levels of COVID restrictions. We would like to make it clear that we continue to stand beside our local business owners, and we oppose our county's apparent unequal treatment and move to Level Red. We reiterate our request that you help our community's local restaurants by allowing indoor dining in Douglas County to reopen at some viable percentage, as outdoor-only service is simply impractical this time of year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JE" followed by a stylized flourish.

Mayor Jason Gray, Town of Castle Rock