

Alamance County

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April 20, 2020

The Honorable Roy Cooper
North Carolina Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NCC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Cooper:

On behalf of the people of Alamance County, thank you for your diligence and hard work in addressing the difficult challenges raised by the COVID-19 crisis. I write to you today to request that you adopt a regional approach, leveraging relationships between local governments in targeted areas and releasing from state-wide orders the many communities that data reveal are minimally impacted by the virus.

The map of counties with the greatest number of confirmed cases provides a path to a regional approach. Thirty counties in North Carolina make up 86% of the COVID-19 case count. However, Executive Orders cover the entire state without regard to the severity of the outbreak. Instead of crafting state-wide restrictions, I respectfully ask that you consider a regional approach of working with local governments to keep necessary restrictions in place in the areas that have been hard hit by the virus while allowing rural counties and towns to begin rebuilding their communities.

Many have applauded your analogy of lifting of restrictions to a dimmer light switch with incremental adjustments, and a regional approach could be an important component of that strategy. Children in rural counties, where lack of internet access is a huge obstacle for online learning, could return to school. Rural hospitals, which have been financially devastated by the inability to perform elective procedures, are not in danger of being overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients and should be able to resume normal operations. Our fragile rural economies could begin the process of rebuilding.

I ask you to personally reach out to the leaders of the counties and cities where the virus has hit the hardest, starting with the 30 counties that account for 86% of the cases, asking for cooperation in approving local restrictions that continue stay at home orders.

This is not to advocate for a patchwork of confusing and complex restrictions that vary widely between counties. Local governments should work in tandem, adopt restrictions that have demonstrated their effectiveness, and create a swath of protection where it is needed.

The state-wide approach was appropriate for the first few weeks of this crisis as we learned how the virus spreads; however, now that we have data and can see how the virus has impacted communities, we can draw on our experience to work together in moving forward with a regional approach.

Sincerely,

Amy Scott Galey, Chair
Alamance County Board of Commissioners