



Washington State Legislature

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Gov. Inslee:

The coronavirus has had a daunting effect on lives across the globe, in our country, state and our communities. Dealing with an unknown enemy is not something any of us thought we would be doing as this year began. It is a challenge for all of us, but now more than ever we need leadership to start bringing back our economy and get people back to work. We are reaching a very critical juncture.

The “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order has been effective, and our citizens should be commended for doing a good job of keeping our state healthy. However, as we continue to require people to stay home, not working, their mental state begins to deteriorate. In communities across Washington stress and anxiety are increasing. We are also concerned about the potential increase of domestic violence, child abuse and suicide. While we must not lose focus on our public health, it is a mental health and quality of life issue for those who are out of work and stuck in their homes. The longer we operate under lockdown type conditions, the more vulnerable people become.

Without an official plan to restart our economy, very soon the standard in Washington could end up being high unemployment and a smaller economy. That would be devastating. People want to go back to work. They want job security and to be able to provide for their families. They also are hungry for outdoor recreation such as fishing, golf and other outdoor activities. Participation in these activities can be done safely with the social distancing and other accepted methods.

Our farmers are falling further behind every day. Contracts with potato farmers are being cancelled, dairy farmers are dumping milk and with restaurants closed there is very little market for other agricultural products, such as the live cattle market prices going down due to packing houses closing. The shutdown on elective surgery is threatening the financial well-being of our small rural and critical care hospitals and medical providers. The lack of construction is also having a negative effect on families and communities. We cannot ignore the economic impacts and societal effects of what is happening to folks out of work.

Obviously, there are concerns about how we can put people back to work safely, but if we do not try soon, it will be harder to instill some discipline and direction as people lose their patience and become more frustrated. Implementing some basic guidelines to keep citizens safe and still productive, is worth the effort to move forward.

1. Returning to work now could be voluntary.
2. Maintain strict social distancing.
3. Monitor the health of all returning workers at the start of each workday.
4. Strict personal hygiene practices such as frequent hand washing, wearing masks when appropriate, gloves and sanitizing techniques.
5. And other measures as deemed appropriate.

We want to assure you, that elected officials in rural Washington are here to assist you and lead in any manner we can. While this is a crisis, it is also a challenge that those of us who live in the rural part of the state are up to taking on. Hard work and lifting up our communities are what we are all about in rural Washington. At a time when it feels like people are growing further apart, let's come together and put Washingtonians back to work and begin our economic recovery. Please feel free to reach out to myself and any of my colleagues who also signed the letter for suggestions. We want to help our economic recovery as a team. We cannot let the cure be worse than the disease.

Sincerely,



Representative Tom Dent
13th District



Senator Judy Warnick
13th District



Representative Chris Corry
14th District



Representative Gina Mosbrucker
14th District



Representative Jenny Graham
6th District



Representative Kelly Chambers
25th District



Representative Matt Boehnke
8th District




Senator Curtis King
14th District



Representative Larry Hoff
18th District



Representative Keith Goehner
12th District



Representative Bradley Klippert
8th District



Representative Bill Jenkin
16th District



Representative Alex Ybarra
13th District



Representative Ed Orcutt
20th District



Representative Skyler Rude
16th District



Representative Joe Schmick
9th District



Representative Carolyn Eslick
39th District



Senator Lynda Wilson
17th District



Representative Robert Sutherland
39th District



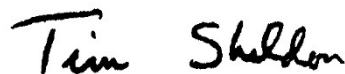
Representative Luanne Van Werven
42nd District



Senator Randi Becker
2nd District



Representative Drew MacEwen
35th District



Senator Tim Sheldon
35th District



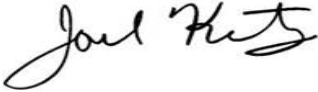
Representative Michelle Caldier
26th District



Senator Shelly Short
7th District



Representative Mike Volz
6th District



Representative Joel Kretz
7th District



Senator Jim Honeyford
15th District



Senator Sharon Brown
8th District



Representative Vicki Kraft
17th District



Representative Andrew Barkis
2nd District



Representative Jeremie Dufault
15th District



Senator Mike Padden
4th District



Representative Mary Dye
9th District

