



June 5, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA email: [externalaffairs@gov.ca.gov](mailto:externalaffairs@gov.ca.gov)

**RE: Support of advancing California Roadmap to expanded stage 2**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of businesses in Imperial County, please accept this letter as our endorsement of the Imperial County Board of Supervisors' letter to you on June 3 requesting that our state advance the California Roadmap to Pandemic Resilience Expanded Stage 2 (Stage 2B) and allow counties to determine when it is safe for each of them to reopen businesses.

By way of introduction, the Imperial Valley Business Recovery Task Force is a coalition of businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies and other stakeholders, that was formed in March to assist in mitigating the disastrous impact that COVID-19 has inflicted on our local economy.

As you know, Imperial County is a unique border community, and our geographic location makes it extremely difficult to meet current reopening guidelines. Not only does Imperial County border Mexicali, Mexico, a Baja California city of more than 1 million residents, but we also border the state of Arizona -- a state that has opened up all businesses. We are virtually in a no-win situation for our small county to meet the Roadmap to Resilience metric guidelines or qualify for variances as set forth by the state of California.

The situation exacerbates the severe economic impact of this pandemic in our already economically fragile region. Imperial County was called the "Capital of the Great Recession" a decade ago. Once again, we find ourselves situated at the center of an economic and health disaster in the making, much of it due to factors beyond our control. State resources are needed to get us through this health crisis; however, our county's unique geographic position is a good example of why a one-size-fits-all state guideline for emerging out of the pandemic can be unjust.

We recognize that our COVID-19 data, as of the date of this letter, does not reflect acceptable epidemiological stability or vulnerable population PPE inventory levels. Even in light of this, we are confident local officials are better equipped to evaluate the current situation and determine when our county merits reopening.

As a local coalition, we are committed to:

1. Educating our business community about their personal and corporate responsibilities to keep their employees and consumers safe, and
2. Educating the public about their responsibility to follow safety guidelines outlined by health officials.

Our message has been that every individual and business must be accountable to follow COVID-19 health guidelines.

We are confident our solid partnership with Imperial County leadership will help pave the way for a successful move to the California's Pandemic Resilience Roadmap Expanded Stage 2, when appropriate.

Sincerely,

