

December 4, 2020

Dear Governor Polis,

On behalf of the many chambers of commerce, hospitals, businesses, trade associations and local leaders statewide, we want to thank you for seeing the value in a local certification program that encourages and rewards businesses for implementing health and safety best practices that ensure customers and employees are protected as much as possible from contracting COVID 19.

We also applaud the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) for creating a framework for a statewide certification program and for seeking public comment. However, we believe such a program is best led and implemented at the county level. With that in mind, we are jointly submitting an alternative framework. Under this framework, businesses that are strictly implementing best safety practices will not be subject to restrictions that, under the current dial process, changes every two weeks. Regardless of what level a county is on the statewide dial, our businesses will be able to stay open.

Our proposed framework is very similar to what CDPHE is proposing, and is also based on Mesa County's Variance Protection Program (5-Star). However, our framework:

- Allows participating businesses to operate at 50% of their normal capacity, regardless of the risk level the county is at. Implementation of the program will be reevaluated for any county at the purple level (stay at home).
- Allows any county the opportunity to participate without having to go through an arduous process of approval through CDPHE, resulting in true local control among the various local partners within each county.

Dr. Robert Redfield, Director of the CDC, in a meeting with representatives from Chambers around the nation on December 2nd clearly articulated that there is no need for actions that lead to the wholesale shutting down of businesses. Along with airlines and schools, businesses can operate successfully with some strategic modifications to operation. In looking at county data a very small percentage of Colorado residents have been shown to have been infected by visiting a local business. In Mesa County, the most recent two-week data put that number at 6% of positive cases.

We respectfully request that our alternative framework be adopted by your administration. It will save lives and it will save jobs.

Sincerely,

