



[www.njbia.org/recovery](http://www.njbia.org/recovery)

March 5, 2021

Dear Governor Murphy,

As leaders of the Garden State's major business associations, we request that you take action now in two areas that help to responsibly maximize the state's economic recovery.

As you well know, for businesses to plan their next recovery steps, they need predictability and flexibility. New Jerseyans have taken the difficult, but necessary, steps to reduce COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations and the pace of the vaccine rollout is continuing to improve, while warmer weather is just around the corner. To maximize the state's economic recovery, businesses need visibility to a reopening decision-making plan now in order to plan for the months ahead. Further, businesses need to be engaged in the vaccination rollout by being able to operate as community points of dispensing (PODs) for our employees.

**A Comprehensive Reopening Plan:**

The business community needs specific reopening benchmarks to provide transparency and predictability. After nearly a year of the pandemic, businesses are reeling: the number of small businesses open as of February 10 was down 34.2% relative to January 2020. With hospitalizations below 2,000 and other COVID metrics in our continued favor, we need a comprehensive strategic reopening plan that lays out the indicators and thresholds that will determine further reopening this spring and summer. Businesses need that predictability to make informed decisions that are right for their operations, employees, and customers.

We recognize data determines dates. Therefore, we request definitive thresholds be established for the data you are using to drive reopening decisions. Further, those thresholds should only result in restrictions that are narrowly tailored and rationally related to the goals they are seeking given the current circumstances.

Additionally, we request an increase and a new approach to indoor and outdoor gathering capacity limits. For businesses affected by gathering capacity limits, events are usually booked well in advance, meaning businesses need to know now what they can reasonably expect for the spring and summer. At a minimum, capacity limits should be relative to the square footage of a venue. It does not make sense to have the same capacity limit for a small garden party versus a larger venue. As other COVID-19 public health precautions remain in place, increasing gathering capacity limits is responsible and reasonable, especially for outdoor gatherings given the approaching warm weather.

Further, we urge you to review past rules for the childcare industry and enable additional, prudent reopening. Along with schools, childcare centers offer key support to parents who work. The continued practice of placing capacity restrictions on childcare licenses puts the industry in a severely disadvantaged position relative to surrounding states who do not have those restrictions. We fear New Jersey's childcare

industry, after a challenging year and under current capacity limits, will be unable to meet the demand for their services, hindering families from balancing an increasingly normal work schedule and childcare responsibilities.

**Vaccine Distribution:**

As vaccine supply increases, it is highly appropriate to now implement a plan that includes businesses as community PODs. As we move beyond the initial phases of vaccine distribution, utilizing employers could improve vaccination efficiency, free up capacity at open PODs, and improve vaccine hesitancy given that employees already have an established relationship with their employers.

Employers can be a good source of education for their workforce as the vaccine rollout continues and employees may be more apt to engage in the process if they choose to be vaccinated when their employer is involved in the process. As such, it is time to provide employers with a plan to be further engaged in the vaccine rollout, as we have seen in other states.

These requested actions are essential, and the timing is now critical, as our COVID numbers continue to move in our favor and warmer weather is on the horizon. As we move into the spring and summer, we cannot afford to lose a single day of opportunity to responsibly and safely bring our businesses further along to their recovery. Businesses need to plan now and, therefore, need to be aware of the state's plan. Providing straightforward reopening metrics, a road ahead for removing capacity limits and a plan for expanding vaccine distribution would give businesses the information they need to safely succeed. Without the ability to make informed and strategic decisions, New Jersey will continue to suffer economically even as the nation begins to move forward.

If you have any questions, please contact NJBIA Chief Government Affairs Officer Chrissy Buteas at [cbuteas@njbja.org](mailto:cbuteas@njbja.org).

Sincerely,

African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, Inc.  
American Camp Association NY/NJ  
American Institute of Architects/ NJ Chapter  
American Council of Engineering Companies of New Jersey  
American Physical Therapy Association of New Jersey  
Big I New Jersey  
BioNJ  
Burlington County Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Bus Association of New Jersey (BANJ)  
Cape May County Chamber of Commerce  
Capital Region Minority Chamber of Commerce  
Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia  
Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey  
Chemistry Council of New Jersey  
Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey  
CrossState Credit Union Association  
Downtown New Jersey

Early Childhood Education Advocates  
Eastern Monmouth Area Chamber of Commerce  
Employers Association of NJ  
Fuel Merchants Associates of NJ  
Garden State Pharmacy Owners, Inc  
Greater Atlantic City Chamber  
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Greater NJ MotorCoach Association  
Greater Toms River Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
Hoboken Chamber of Commerce  
Home Care & Hospice Association of New Jersey  
Home Health Services Association of New Jersey  
Hudson County Chamber of Commerce  
Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce  
Insurance Council of New Jersey  
Jersey Shore Partnership  
Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Marine Trades Association of New Jersey  
Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Meadowlands Chamber  
Monmouth Ocean Development Council  
Morris County Chamber of Commerce  
NAIOP-NJ  
National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)  
Newark Alliance  
Newark Regional Business Partnership  
New Jersey Asphalt Pavement Association  
New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons  
New Jersey Bankers Association  
New Jersey Builders Association  
New Jersey Business & Industry Association  
New Jersey Camps Government Affairs Project  
New Jersey Campground Owners and Outdoor Lodging Association  
New Jersey Civil Justice Institute  
New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers  
New Jersey Concrete and Aggregate Association  
New Jersey Council of County Colleges  
New Jersey Dental Association  
New Jersey Fitness Alliance  
New Jersey Food Council  
New Jersey Gasoline-Convenience-Automotive Association  
New Jersey Hotel and Lodging Industry Association  
New Jersey Independent Electrical Contractors Association  
New Jersey Liquor Store Alliance  
New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc.  
New Jersey Motor Truck Association

New Jersey Pharmacists Association  
New Jersey Podiatric Medical Society  
New Jersey Restaurant & Hospitality Association  
New Jersey Retail Merchants Association  
New Jersey Salon and Spa Coalition  
New Jersey Self Insurers Association  
New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants  
New Jersey State Funeral Directors Association  
New Jersey State Veterans Chamber of Commerce  
New Jersey Tourism Industry Association  
New Jersey Warehousemen & Movers Association  
New Jersey YMCA State Alliance  
New York Shipping Association, Inc.  
NJ Society of Optometric Physicians (NJSOP)  
North Jersey Jewish Business Alliance  
Ocean City Chamber of Commerce  
Phillipsburg Chamber of Commerce  
Princeton Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Professional Insurance Agents of New Jersey (PIANJ)  
Recreational Fishing Alliance  
Salem County Chamber of Commerce  
Somerset County Business Partnership  
Southern NJ Development Council  
Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce  
Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ  
Sussex County Chamber of Commerce  
TechUnited:NJ  
The Greater NJ Motorcoach Association  
The United Boatmen of N.J.  
Union Township Chamber of Commerce  
Washington Borough BID