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Governor Philip Murphy

State Capitol
Trenton, NJ

Dear Governor Murphy,

I am writing to you on behalf of the small business owners in Cape May County who are desperate to open and salvage what we can of a season after a devastating spring.

My family owns and operates Pete Smith's Surf Shops in both Cape May and Stone Harbor and we have been serving our communities year-round proudly since 1983. As far back as I can remember I have looked forward to summer. My favorite holidays are Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day, and not for the reasons you might think. I have never indulged in lazy, long weekends on the beach or holiday barbecues or parties. Instead, I enjoy long hours in the shop catching up with our friendly customers about their winter adventures and learning where their children, who once-upon-a-time couldn't see over the counter while purchasing their first boogie boards, will be attending college in the fall. Leading up to the season I carefully pick out new merchandise and meticulously arrange and rearrange displays to prepare our shops. I have been fortunate to watch families grow and make lifelong friendships through our small business. I look forward to the return of our extended family, our seasonal visitors, each year to our tiny towns by the sea and to our shops that I love so much.

It is heartbreaking that this season will be different, but we will make the necessary adjustments to move forward. I understand the sacrifices that we have been making to keep people well, but I can no longer accept the notion that small businesses are incapable of following the same CDC recommendations that have enabled big box stores to remain open throughout the pandemic. We will follow the guidelines and do everything in our power to protect our staff and customers. We will get this right, not just because our livelihoods depend on it, but because we care about each and every member of our extended family. I know that this is a difficult decision, but it is time to let us open. Trust us. We have built our small businesses from hard work and perseverance. We can do hard things.

Thank you for your time. Stay well.

Sincerely,
Meghan Protasi