

MARK A. SATHER  
SCOTT WALLS  
JEFF THOMAS  
Board of Commissioners

HEATHER N. FELLMAN  
Chief Clerk



PETER McMANAMON  
Solicitor

MEETING DAY  
TUESDAY--9:30 A.M.

PHONE: 814-643-3091  
FAX: 814-643-8152

## Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

OFFICE OF

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HUNTINGDON, PENNSYLVANIA 16652

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

We, the Huntingdon County Commissioners, are asking you to reexamine and revise your COVID-19 plan for Huntingdon County. We are petitioning you to:

### ***CHANGE THE REGIONAL DESIGNATION FOR HUNTINGDON COUNTY***

Huntingdon County does not fit in the current regional designation. We are a rural county with a low population and the majority cases of COVID-19 represents an isolated group within the State Prison System, (27 of 57) County Cases as of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We do not belong with urban and suburban counties to our east who continue to increase cases in substantial numbers. We ask the Department of Health to align Huntingdon County with the six counties with whom we have an established formal partnership in the Southern Alleghenies Region. We urge you to form the South-Central Mountains Regional Task Force consisting in the Counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset. These counties represent a specific strategy and environmental condition, which has helped to mitigate the spread of the virus. As of the current date, 172 cases and 3 deaths have occurred in this entire six-county region of almost 500,000 people. To apply the three-color phasing strategy by region, Huntingdon County belongs with other similar counties.

### ***ALLOW HUNTINGDON COUNTY TO BE IN THE NEXT GROUP TO MOVE OUT OF THE RED PHASE***

Outbreaks have occurred in 41 identified long-term care facilities and personal care homes in Adams, Centre, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon and York. Yet, our local hospital has no one on ventilators and our long-term care facilities currently have no positive or probable cases of COVID-19 within their facilities. Utilizing the Department of Health's recommendations of social distancing and personal care. Huntingdon within our residential community has been successful mitigating the spread of the virus than in other more highly populated areas of the Commonwealth.

Citizens have learned greatly over the past month about how to distance themselves, how to protect themselves and others, and how to stay safe. Every individual strives to adhere to recommendations of the Department of Health.

Huntingdon County asks to be in a priority position to transition to the yellow phase. We realize geography, population and community buy-in are the strengths needed effectively implementing the new normal in everyday life in the Commonwealth.

**GIVE EVERY BUSINESS IN HUNTINGDON COUNTY THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN AND OPERATE SAFELY**

Please eliminate guidelines that favor big box stores. Develop objective opening and operating safety guidelines that protect public health and allow all businesses the opportunity to meet those requirements. As a rural county, Huntingdon's economy depends on small businesses being able to provide in-person services based on the Governor's safety orders.

**SUPPORT OUR RURAL PENN HIGHLANDS HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS**

We are calling for the increased availability of tests and equipment to protect both service providers and citizens. Huntingdon County must be equipped for high levels of care during this pandemic.

We thank you for your continuing work to lead Pennsylvania through this emergency. As county officials, we ask for an open conversation with you and/or members of your staff via ZOOM or conference call about this matter. We look forward to receiving your response and working with you to mitigate COVID-19 in Huntingdon County.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Sather, Chairman



Scott Walls, Vice Chairman



Jeff Thomas, Secretary

