



MASSPIRG | Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group

His Excellency Charlie Baker
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 280
Boston MA 02133

July 22, 2020

Dear Governor Baker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our state over the last four months. We have endured incredible hardship to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, and we don't want our hard-won progress to go to waste. We appreciate your leadership in tackling the virus to date, and encourage you to stay the course - maintain all current restrictions, and be prepared to shut down again if new outbreaks emerge.

We have been tracking critical public health metrics around the country for COVID-19 containment, building on the work of [COVID Exit Strategy](#), a national group of public health and crisis experts. Since May, Exit Strategy has graded the readiness of all 50 states to reopen, using a simple Red / Yellow / Green color scale. However, as the national situation worsened through June and July, the group was forced to add a fourth color to their grading scale, "bruised red," reflecting that the national situation was getting worse - not better.

Massachusetts is doing better than most. Currently, Exit Strategy rates Massachusetts "Yellow - Caution Warranted." However, we can't get complacent now. COVID-19 is spreading out of control in 20 states, and 17 more states are trending in that direction. Without a nation-wide ban on non-essential interstate travel, new infections from harder-hit regions could jeopardize our progress against the virus.

We are calling for states that reopened before they were ready to [shut down, start over, and do it right](#) the second time. This call has been joined by 160 [public health professionals](#), including Ezekiel J. Emanuel, MD, PhD-University of Pennsylvania, William Hanage, PhD-Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Yaneer Bar-Yam, PhD, New England Complex Systems Institute and Maimuna Majumder, PhD, MPH Boston Children's Hospital & Harvard Medical School. Massachusetts isn't in that boat - yet - but infections are still at a level that warrants caution. Until things improve, we need to maintain all current restrictions, and be prepared to lock down again if things begin to worsen. We are grateful for your leadership and, as always, look forward to working with your administration to promote public health and the public interest.

Sincerely,

Janet Domenitz, Executive Director, MASSPIRG

Janet.Domenitz@MASSPIRG.org

Deirdre Cummings, Legislative Director, MASSPIRG

Dcummings@MASSPIRG.org

cc:

Secretary MaryLou Sudders

Kristen Lepore

Haley Arnold

Katherine Holahan