



County of Orange

County Executive Office

September 21, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

At the beginning of 2020, major theme parks in Orange County (County) employed more than 42,000 employees who served approximately 30 million visitors annually. Since the shelter-at-home orders went into effect in mid-March, tens of thousands of employees have been furloughed or permanently laid off and hundreds of resort-based small businesses have filed for bankruptcy or have permanently closed.

The economic impacts are affecting all 3.2 million residents of Orange County. In addition to double-digit unemployment rates and small business losses, our public agencies are reeling from significant losses of tax revenue to fund public safety and vital community services. Make no mistake: the County's request of Governor Newsom to re-open our theme parks is firmly rooted in our concern for the long-term welfare of our residents.

As one of the first counties in the United States to have a confirmed COVID-19 case, the County has steadfastly prepared its public health response to protect the welfare and safety of all who live, work, and visit our area. We immediately established an open line of communication between the County Board of Supervisors, health officials, cities, and the business community. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined throughout the pandemic to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and to respond swiftly, as we did in July, to reduce any spikes in transmission.

As of today, Orange County has among the lowest case rates of any of the ten largest counties in the state (all ten have more than one million residents); regardless of whether the adjusted case rate or the unadjusted case rate is being examined. The County's adjusted case rate is among the lowest of the state's 28 counties with more than 200,000 people. Orange County's positivity rate is lower than the statewide median of all counties in California.

Theme parks across the country have opened, some for several months, with no recorded outbreaks of coronavirus. Disney Company theme parks have a proven track record of implementing stringent health and safety protocols as they've opened their parks around the world, at reduced capacities, with no adverse health impacts. Downtown Disney in Anaheim has been open since mid-June with no recorded cases of COVID-19. The County's theme parks are prepared to safely re-open now and the County is prepared to adhere to and enforce state guidelines for theme parks once they are issued.

As theme parks in California are allowed to re-open, the County is confident that we have the necessary infrastructure and public health measures in place to ensure the safety of residents, employees, and visitors to Orange County.

Sincerely,

Frank Kim



County Executive Officer