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**Orange County Leaders Plead with Governor to Allow Southern California Theme Parks to Safely Reopen**

*Lack of Guidelines Means Hundreds of Small Businesses, Tens of Thousands of Jobs, and Billions in Economic Activity Remain Shuttered*

ANAHEIM, Calif. – Three Orange County Mayors joined with local business leaders, representatives of workers, and small business owners to urge Governor Gavin Newsom to issue theme park health and safety guidelines so that theme parks have a chance to re-open safely.

The Mayors previewed a new website - [ReOpenOCNow.com](http://ReOpenOCNow.com) – which encourages residents to contact the Governor and encourage him to issue the guidelines – while highlighting the economic harm caused by the continued closure with no end in sight.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced countless Orange County businesses to close, many likely forever. Unemployment in Anaheim is at a historic high of at least 15%, with almost 30,000 people out of work in the City, while Orange County nears 300,000 people without a job. The Anaheim City budget deficit is at \$100 million and continues growing every week the Disneyland Resort is closed. Nearby Garden Grove faces a similar struggle, and neighboring Buena Park, where Knott’s Berry Farm also remains closed, shares this fate.

“This is not about opening Disneyland for Disney's sake. This is hard on Disney but they will survive,” said Anaheim Mayor Harry Sidhu. “This is about opening Disneyland to save hundreds of small businesses. Tens of thousands of jobs. Making sure my city can provide basic municipal services without going broke. I personally invite this Governor, who I have praised from day one of this crisis, to come to Anaheim, see the economic ruin, see for himself the safety protocols in place, and issue theme park guidelines to give us a chance to recover.”

Workers are feeling the impact of the continued closures, as several labor representatives noted.

“The national economy has already begun to show signs of improvement, but the unemployment numbers in California continue to grow at alarming rates,” Ernesto Medrano, Orange County Building Trades Council Representative, said. “Every day that passes our workers lose wages and businesses lose revenue that can never be recouped. At this point, our economy is on life support.”

State guidelines to reopening theme parks have yet to be set, while nail salons, movie theaters, and even zoos in neighboring San Diego are opening. Without theme park reopening guidelines, businesses in Orange County that have barely held on for six months will soon shut their doors forever, costing thousands of more people their jobs and chance to provide for their families.

The Anaheim travel industry is a worldwide leader in tourism and is prepared to meet the Governor's standards for reopening once issued. Effective safety protocols are in place at Downtown Disney and Walt Disney World, and other Disney theme parks around the world. Learning to live with COVID means setting industry opening guidelines for amusement parks and letting those businesses show whether they can meet them.

"Our local businesses, big and small, need the opportunity to show that they can safely reopen and be judged on their plans, procedures, and track record, and we can expect that Disney of all companies will be able to show that they can do what they do best, provide a safe environment for employees to earn a living and visitors to be entertained," said Dara Maleki, owner of the Pizza Press restaurant across the street from Disneyland.

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