



Governor John C. Carney
150 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd South
Tatnall Building, 2nd Floor
Dover, DE 19901

May 19, 2020

Dear Governor Carney,

On behalf of the Delaware Hotel and Lodging Association (DHLA), the over 17,000 hotel employees, and the 44,000 jobs that tourism supports in the state, I am respectfully requesting that you strongly reconsider your Phase 1 plan as it relates to the restrictions you have in place for leisure travel.

As you have seen, several other neighboring states have “opened for business” welcoming vacation / leisure travelers to enjoy their beaches and attractions. Losing this business to other states like Maryland or New Jersey will cause irreparable financial loss to the hotels who rely on the seasonal vacationers to support their business and the other industries that hospitality supports.

The hotels in Delaware have prepared and continue to prepare for the “new normal”. Many hotels have been open supporting the essential workers, medical staff, and critical guests who use our facilities as a home away from home. We are proud to continue to support the vital businesses! We feel strongly that we are prepared to reopen to leisure business and would like this considered based on the following points:

- Hotels have implemented standards within the properties to promote social distancing and increased sanitation, to protect guests and associates alike. These are in line with guidelines provided by the CDC. A comprehensive set of these standards has been provided to your office for review, and we hope to hear something soon to discuss these plans.
- DHLA has worked with the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) and their Safe Stay initiative, which is recognized worldwide as an industry leading program to address this current pandemic, and continues to provide resources to ensure safety standards are updated based on CDC guidelines and safe hotel operations.
- Most of the hotels in Delaware are small businesses, and many have taken on PPP loans to provide a short bridge to keep their hotels ready for the summer. Hotels will not be able to sustain cashflow under the current restrictions as these loans come to an end. This will result in closures and losses of many hotels, unable to recover from missing a key part of the “tourist” season.
- Like many industries that have already opened (or who are opening as a part of phase 1) hotels have the capability to reduce their occupancy and set up their public areas to promote social

distancing. Guests can check in to many hotels without visiting the desk (through keyless check-in or prearrival check-ins) and can also be blocked in areas of the building to provide separation necessary.

Watching cars drive through our state to visit our neighbors is deflating to the business owners and employees who are prepared to service the guests who would prefer to visit Delaware. Having Delawareans vacation in Ocean City, Maryland or New Jersey does not help stop the spread. Watching our employees go work in other states so they can feed their families, when we could provide them with jobs is disheartening to say the least.

As a proud representative of the hospitality community in Delaware, I hope you reconsider the current restrictions and allow hotels to open for all business. We would be happy to set up a call with our board and some owners representatives who proudly continue to invest in Delaware's future. We firmly believe that a phased in approach to leisure travel is necessary and would help support the hospitality industry which represents the fourth largest employment segment in the state. Help us stop the tourism dollars from literally driving through out state and support Delawareans and their businesses.

Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me at any time to discuss further.

Yours in hospitality,

Bill Silva
Chairman
Delaware Hotel and Lodging Association