

**COUNTY OF WALLA WALLA
STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

April 23, 2020

Dear Walla Walla County Citizens,

The Walla Walla County Commissioners' Office has received multiple calls, emails, and inquiries from the community regarding how Walla Walla County will be responding to recent decisions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Our office has been in contact with the Governor's Office to provide a detailed, specific, and measurable plan to reopen Washington State in a responsible and timely manner, to ensure a safe return to public life.

We understand our community's desire to "return to normal" and the need for our local businesses to be able to reopen. We also appreciate the inequities that exist in allowing certain functions to continue as essential while other similar functions are deemed non-essential and prohibited. However, the Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners does not have the legal authority to override the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" proclamation. We are disappointed in the Governor's recent press conference, and strongly encourage his office to develop a detailed plan to reopen the state that takes into account the local conditions that exist across our state.

The health and safety of our community are also of paramount importance, and Walla Walla County Commissioners will continue to encourage our County employees, local business, and community members to observe the recommended health and safety guidelines as set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), and the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health including, but not limited to: staying home when sick, washing hands often, practicing physical distancing, and maintaining other good health habits.

Walla Walla County Commissioners have been and will continue to discuss how to safely and responsibly begin to reopen County facilities and other activities under the purview of the Board of Commissioners, while ensuring that we follow the guidance of local public health officials.

If you have additional questions or concerns related to the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy proclamation, or the reopening of businesses, please contact the Governor's Office at 360-902-4111.

Thank you and stay healthy!

WALLA WALLA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

James K. Johnson

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