

Hunterdon Freeholders: Governor Must Re-open Region Before It Is Too Late

Citing the minimal number of new daily community spread COVID-19 cases in the county, over 10,000 unemployment claims from county residents, and the imminent end to the federal government's paycheck protection program (PPP), the Hunterdon County Freeholders, during its June 2nd meeting, called for Governor Phil Murphy to fully re-open the economy in the county and northwest New Jersey region, before it is too late.

Freeholder Board Deputy Director Sue Soloway, who is the Health Department liaison, stated "With a daily average increase of community spread virus at just four cases, the curve has not only been flattened, it is in a steep decline. It is time to open up all of our businesses, put people back to work, and start the economy on an upward projection again."

Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren noted he had joined with the Freeholder Directors from Warren and Sussex Counties last week, to call on the Governor to permit the northwest region of the state, where COVID-19 cases are extremely low, to re-open all businesses in the region. "It is essential that our businesses be permitted to reopen using the existing health protection measures already authorized and implemented for essential retail and limited non-essential retail businesses," the Director said.

Freeholder Matt Holt, the Board's liaison for Economic Development, stated, "The Governor's plan for re-opening is moving too slowly for our region, the economic recovery becomes more difficult each day of delay."

"The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board reports that unemployment in Hunterdon County has reached 10,644 individuals. This is disheartening. And the only way it will stop is if businesses are allowed to open and people can go back to work," Freeholder Zach Rich, the Board's liaison to the Workforce Board, reported at the meeting.

Freeholder John E. Lanza noted, "The federal Paycheck Protection Program, which has provided direct incentive and forgivable loans for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll, will expire during July, closing more businesses and sending more people to the unemployment line. Action must be taken immediately to open businesses in our area to prevent this doomsday scenario."

Van Doren concluded, "In Hunterdon County, and the northwest corner of New Jersey, businesses are ready to operate and people want to go back to work. It's time."

The Freeholder Boards of Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex County have established 'A Gateway To Resources For Business Re-opening' website; www.hunterdonwarrensussex.com, to provide the best, most recent information available for commercial re-openings that protect the health of customers and employees.