



November 12, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Micro-Cluster Zone Impact on Local Businesses

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of the members of the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, I urge you to adjust guidance and provide additional resources to further support and protect local businesses placed in Micro-Cluster Zones.

Due to a spike in cases, businesses in Chemung County have been placed in the Orange and Yellow Micro-Cluster Zones. Although some businesses, like restaurants, are able to continue to provide a portion of their services, albeit in many cases limited to takeout only, other businesses like Gyms, Fitness Centers, Salons, Barber Shops, and other personal service professions have been forced to close entirely. This has been devastating to these businesses, many of whom were the last to reopen when New York began its phased re-openings after the complete shutdown.

County Executive Moss, working in concert with the Chemung County Public Health Director, has been unable to establish any link between the increase in cases and those businesses providing personal services, including Gyms, Fitness Centers, Salons, and Barber Shops. Furthermore, residents within the Orange Micro-Cluster Zone and individuals that normally travel to this zone to patronize these businesses are simply driving to neighboring communities for those same services. This seems counterintuitive to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is ultimately damaging to our local economy, both immediately and in the long run. As we try and help businesses navigate this crisis, regulations like these, although well-meaning in nature, further lessen the chance these businesses will survive, let alone thrive.

As we request that you consider updates to the Orange Micro-Cluster Zone guidance, we also urge you to continue to do all that is within your power to provide resources so that we can effectively test within the community and provide adequate contact tracing. Our community is committed to doing all we can to help stop the spread of COVID-19, but we need greater assistance to make our efforts more effective.

Governor Cuomo, thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented time. You have made our state a shining example for the nation of what we can accomplish when we work together with one shared goal. We appreciate all you have done for Chemung County and the Southern Tier region and hope that through your consideration of our request we can find a workable middle ground to prevent further economic devastation for our small businesses.

Sincerely,

Kamala Keeley
President & Chief Executive Officer
Chemung County Chamber of Commerce