



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LYON COUNTY NEVADA**

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September 16, 2020

Chairman Caleb Cage
COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force
101 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Sent by email to: ccage@gov.nv.gov
mwranson@gov.nv.gov

Dear Chairman Cage,

Lyon County is currently being monitored due to being out of compliance on 2 out of 3 of the State of Nevada's criteria. I will be frank and to the point. Lyon County as a local political subdivision has exhausted remedies to stay in compliance with the criteria.

Lyon County has 2001 square miles with 7 communities. 2 of those communities are incorporated cities (Fernley and Yerington) with their own local governments.

An article from June of 2018 in the Fernley Leader-Courier, a publication managed by the Reno-Gazette Journal provided the following information:

“According to U.S. Census data, in 2016, 47.94 percent of employed Lyon County residents worked in Lyon County, while 20.93 percent commuted to Washoe County and 19.9 percent commuted to Carson City. Conversely, 93.12 percent of employed Washoe County residents worked in Washoe County. Just 0.64 percent commuted to Lyon County, and 1.94 percent commuted to Carson City. In Carson City, 74.15 percent of employed city residents worked in Carson, while 4.04 percent commuted to Lyon County and 10.89 percent commuted to Washoe County.”

I share this information to explain one of the difficulties with testing a commuter population that live 30 to 60 minutes apart. We have and continue to partner with Carson City Health and Human to provide testing for COVID as well as follow up processes of any positive tests. Our Community Health Nurses and South Lyon Medical Center are also providing testing and reporting to CCHHS.

Lyon County has and continues to push information out to the public via our social media platforms, web site and media releases.

One has to ask with testing readily available and a strong public affairs campaign to inform citizens why our testing numbers are low.

There a number of thoughts on this issue:

- The general public does not know where the 150 tests/100,000 population/day comes from and why it's important.
- Fear of losing pay and jobs if tested positive.
- Fear of increasing Lyon County's test positivity resulting in the state shutting businesses down or imposing further restrictions.
- Perceived inconsistencies of the State's enforcement. Nevada OSHA issues businesses a warning or citation for not following the directives but cities and counties are ignored when they allow mass gatherings (Softball tournaments in Yerington/Elko, Campaign Rally in Douglas County, etc.)
- Confusing changes of recommendations from CDC or other Public Health entities
- Inability to get to a test location due to work
- Inability to get transportation or cannot afford to drive to testing locations.
- The reality that COVID-19 has become a political issue and people are taking sides not based upon scientific research
- A mistrust of government due to the politicization of a public health issue.
- A general apathy as less than 1% of our population has tested positive since March.
- A lack of public information on how COVID is impacting our hospitals.

Lyon County has been informed that it can make tighter restrictions than authorized by the directives. If the County chose to do that we would have no enforcement authority pursuant to existing statutes. Lyon County has threatened the suspension of business licenses or other privileged licenses and permits if businesses do not comply. To date those threats gained compliance.

Lyon County has and will continue to seek compliance with the Emergency Directives, will continue to inform our constituents of testing, social distancing, etc. and work with our businesses to gain compliance.

During one of our conversations I expressed that the general public does not understand the rationale or science behind the criteria. It is our belief that if the criteria was better understood that we would see higher numbers of tests. It is our belief that if the general public saw a consistent approach to enforcement that compliance would increase.

These are trying times for all of us. None of us wants to be at odds with each other or the people we serve. People are tired and irritable about COVID-19, smoke and politics. What we need is a clear and consistent public health message and process. All of us

(State, County and Cities) are doing our best to balance public health, maintain a viable economy and not violate the rights of our constituents.

Lyon County has already submitted our plan to the Task Force. We are open to any suggestions for improvement. We are working to develop alternative solutions for the State of Nevada to consider in the future.

Respectfully

/s/ Jeffery A. Page

Jeffery A. Page
County Manager/Emergency Manager

cc. Board of Health
City of Fernley
City of Yerington
Carson City County
Douglas County
Storey County
NACO
Carson City Health and Human Services