

**Cape May County
New Jersey
Board of Chosen Freeholders
Public Information**

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NEWS
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CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY: A consensus-driven coalition of Cape May County Freeholders, Mayors and Business Community leaders today made a submission to Governor Phil Murphy entitled “A Proposal for the Safe, Thoughtful and Progressive Reopening of Cape May County During the Time of COVID-19.” The proposal details a potential path for reopening Cape May County that is focused on safety first.

On April 14, 2020, the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders created a Business Recovery Task Force, Co-Chaired by Freeholder Vice-Director Len Desiderio and Freeholder Will Morey. Over a dozen members of the business community volunteered their time and talents and all sixteen of Cape May County’s Mayors were made a part of what has become the Cape May County-Wide Recovery Initiative. The Recovery Initiative, in consultation with health care professionals and with respect for the orders and directives of the Governor, crafted a proposal that is focused on four main topics for the Governor’s consideration:

1. Cape May County is a close-knit community and the loss of life we have suffered hits us particularly hard. In the broader picture, Cape May County has suffered a mild outbreak and a downward trend appears to be underway.
2. Cape May County is unique in its contribution to the State’s economy for its size and is also uniquely vulnerable economically given its utter dependence on the seasonal tourism industry. The potential dire consequence for the small businesses and working families of Cape May County cannot be overstated.
3. Cape May County’s business and governmental sectors stand ready to implement and enforce extensive mitigation protocols related to social distancing, personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves, sanitation, disinfection and employee monitoring in order to emulate to the greatest extent possible the prophylactic effects of the stay-at-home order.
4. A safe, thoughtful and progressive reopening of public facilities and businesses is proposed over the course of the next several weeks with an acknowledgment that a traditional Memorial Day weekend opening is unlikely to occur. Consensus has been built by and between our business community and our local and County governments to accept this reality and work with the Governor on a reopening that invests in the safety of the community, the dampening of the spread of the virus and the economic future of Cape May County.

“The distance we have come since April 14th, is purely amazing,” said Freeholder Will Morey. “Our Mayors, business community and Board of Chosen Freeholders have come together in an unprecedented show of unity on behalf of the people of Cape May County. With great respect for the public health challenges that still remain, we believe we have crafted a proposal that charts the course for the safe reopening of our businesses and public facilities over the next several weeks. We are moving forward in a spirit of cooperation with the Governor to discuss our proposal and to take the first steps necessary to begin the long recovery ahead of us.”

Understanding that only a progressive reopening will help to ensure the safety of resident and visitors in Cape May County, the Recovery Initiative has proposed an allowance for seasonal rentals to commence on May 11, 2020, with shorter term rentals allowed to begin no earlier than June 1, 2020. In support of the recovery of effort, the County of Cape May Freeholder Board modified its emergency order prohibiting rentals. The County's new directive will sync with the Recovery Initiative's proposed dates. Hotels and motels may operate at a capacity of 60% of its full capacity effective Monday, June 1, 2020 and hotels and motels may operate at full capacity effective Monday, June 22, 2020. Under state directives, municipalities retain the ability to take local circumstances into consideration with regard to the timing of allowing rentals to commence at a later date.

"The County of Cape May's active engagement with the Mayors and the business community on health-related concerns and the question of rentals has been a critical component of this effort," said Freeholder Vice-Director Len Desiderio. "Safety protocols and certainty about when rentals can begin are key components of any recovery effort for Cape May County. We will proceed in a thoughtful and safe fashion. I believe we can rely on the people of Cape May County to become educated about safety protocols and to follow them. We have been doing this with essential retail and take out for weeks, and we can do it in other areas of commerce and life just as effectively."

Representatives of the Board of Chosen Freeholders will be discussing the Proposal for the Safe, Thoughtful and Progressive Reopening of Cape May County, with the Governor's Office in the coming days.

Freeholder Morey said, "Our intention has always been to start a respectful conversation with the Governor on these difficult decisions. We want to thank the Governor and his staff for already reaching out to us. As these discussions progress, we should all be preparing for the day when a safe reopening can begin to occur."

"My father is a World War II veteran," said Freeholder Desiderio. "I remember him and my mother telling my brother and me stories of how the community pulled together and did extraordinary things during those trying times. I believe we can do it again. We can follow these protocols to protect our Seniors and most vulnerable citizen especially. And by doing so, we can start down the path toward a free, happy and positive way of life."

The Cape May County-Wide Recovery Initiative encourages everyone to visit <https://capemaycountynj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5974/A-Proposal-to-the-Governor-for-Opening-of-Cape-May-County> to view the proposal and for updates as information develops.

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