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November 6, 2020

Governor of Maryland  
Larry Hogan  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

Thank you for underscoring the seriousness of the increasing COVID case rate across Maryland during your November 5th press conference. We appreciate your message that local governments have the power to put more restrictive policies in place than you have enacted at the state level. However, as local leaders we believe that policies are much more effective when we act together - as one Maryland.

On April 24th, you released the Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery. That was 6 weeks after the closure of schools and 4 weeks after you issued a statewide stay at home order. The seven day average of new cases on April 24th was 11.92 per 100,000. As a result of these decisive actions, Maryland's case rate decreased consistently over the next two months to a low of 5.6 on June 24th.

All of us have thanked you repeatedly for taking these bold steps to save lives in our counties. But it seems as if the state's resolve has weakened since we collectively achieved that positive progress in our battle against this virus. Maryland's case rate has steadily risen since June and we are now experiencing the highest case rate of the year. On November 4, our statewide case rate was 14.98 per 100,000 residents and appears to be on track to continue to rise.

We all know that the increasing COVID-19 spread is not concentrated in any one area of the state. In Allegany County, the seven day case rate on November 6 is 46.7 per 100,000. Across the state on the Eastern Shore, Somerset County has 27.3 cases per 100,000, and Dorchester has 18.8. Our residents do not live their lives confined within the borders of our counties – so our efforts to contain this deadly virus should not either.

We want to partner with you in the effort to crush the curve and beat this virus. Yet it has been 169 days since you last participated in the statewide call with County leaders. You have encouraged jurisdictions with higher case rates to go slower in your announcements of reopenings, but give us no advance notice to engage with our residents, or plan implementation.

Currently, you have placed Maryland in Stage 3 of the Road to Recovery, the stage in which “High Risk” activities may go forward. Some of us have resisted moving into that phase, and maintained tighter restrictions as your executive orders have empowered us to do. Yet as recently as October 22, you criticized us for that resistance. Others among us have concluded that only regional or statewide action is effective and have aligned their counties with the state.

The fall surge in cases that was predicted by public health officials is underway. The “stop signs” described in your Roadmap to Recovery are staring us in the face, demanding that we act, demanding that you act as our governor. While we appreciated your message to take the virus seriously and “wear the damn mask” at your November 5 press conference, we believe a successful effort must go beyond words. We must take action.

In other words, we are back where we started. We are all in this together. We must flatten the curve and we must do it together.

Our local businesses have demonstrated an extraordinary ability to protect customers and employees while staying open but we must act to reduce the activities that are spreading this virus. Many of us are prepared to do that in our jurisdictions, but county borders matter little to this pandemic. We are strongest when we act together. Our constituents are depending on us, and Marylanders are depending on you. Please follow your Road to Recovery framework and take action.

We stand ready to work with you. It's time to start saving lives again.

Sincerely,



Stuart Pittman  
Anne Arundel County Executive



Bernard C. Jack Young  
Mayor of Baltimore City



John Olszewski  
Baltimore County Executive



Jan Gardner  
Frederick County Executive



Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive



Marc Elrich  
Montgomery County Executive



Angela Alsobrooks  
Prince George's County Executive