



## Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association

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Dear Governor Northam,

While dealing with the ongoing crisis, the Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association hopes you will consider restaurants a key component on the first step in re-opening the Virginia economy.

On behalf of over one-hundred restaurants of the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County, along with dozens of associate members representing craft breweries, food distributors, and more segments of the hospitality industry, the Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association commends your administration's efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The strict restrictions on business & citizens in order to slow the spread of the coronavirus, though challenging for all, benefit the health and safety for all Virginians today and into the future.

Food safety has always been a priority for the restaurant industry, for both guests and employees. As we may begin to see a decline in the number of reported cases, along continued increases in testing, WARA assures you we are prepared for restaurants to be a part of "phase one" of the process to re-open our economy. WARA members are equipped with thorough guidance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and National Restaurant Association regarding best practices and strict regulations for safely re-opening our businesses while respecting social distancing.

The coronavirus epidemic is the greatest crisis the restaurant industry has ever faced and our small businesses need added guidance and clear expectations in order to responsibly prepare for an easing of restrictions. We can and will adapt for safety & phased capacities but we need clarity when it comes to the inconsistent dates of Executive Orders 53 & 55. The closing of all dining and congregation areas has forced a tremendous contribution to unemployed Virginians and with your cautious help we are eager to bring our community back to work.

Good luck and godspeed,

Michael Claar

President, Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association

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