

# COUNTY OF STOKES

Andy Nickelston  
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Vice Chairman

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Commissioner

## Board of Commissioners

Post Office Box 20 • 1014 Main Street • Danbury, NC 27016 Fax (336) 593-2346

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4/20/2020

The Honorable Roy Cooper  
Governor of the State of North Carolina  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Cooper:

On behalf of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners and the citizens of Stokes County, I want to thank you for your prompt action in responding to the coronavirus threat to the health and safety of the citizens of North Carolina. I am confident that your actions to date have saved many lives in the state of North Carolina.

While many lives have been saved, the current stay at home order, and closure of businesses has created a great hardship on the citizens of North Carolina, and especially our Stokes County citizens. As I am sure you are aware, Stokes County is a rural county with a population of approximately 46,000 whose business population consists almost entirely of small businesses. If the current business closure order is extended past April 30, I fear that many of our small business owners will never recover.

Because of the rural nature of our county, and the sparse population, it is much easier for the citizens of Stokes County to practice social distancing measures than it would be for metropolitan areas such as Raleigh, Greensboro and Charlotte. Our Board feels that protective measures that may be necessary for these more populous metropolitan areas may not be appropriate for rural areas such as Stokes County. For this reason, our Board feels that after April 30, each county should have flexibility in deciding whether to continue or end stay at home orders and business closures for their respective county.

Our Board and the Stokes County Health Director have been very proactive in instituting social distancing measures which have been more restrictive than those applicable to the entire state of North Carolina. We feel that Stokes County officials and other county officials in the state are in the best position after April 30<sup>th</sup> to make decisions that will be in the best interest of their respective counties. Future restrictions that may be appropriate for larger metropolitan areas may not be appropriate for rural areas such as Stokes County.

For the reasons stated above, on behalf of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners, I urge you to allow individual counties in the state to make decisions regarding stay at home orders and business closures after April 30.

Thank you again for your consideration and your leadership in this crisis.

Sincerely,

Andy Nickelston, Chairman  
Stokes County Board of Commissioners