

ITEM 6.1 Covid -19

BOS Agenda – April 28, 2020

Public Comment

From: Jay Waland [jwaland152@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 11:18 AM
To: Bruno Sabatier
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Question for Board of Supervisors Call

Mr. Sabatier,

I'm directing this message to you since I wasn't sure how to submit my question to the folks managing the conference call broadcast. I'm a small business owner in Clearlake of a small motel (lodging establishment).

Obviously, Lake County has taken a more restrictive approach than the state in general by basically shutting down lodging business. I believe we are among only 2-3 counties in the whole state that have taken this approach. I realize the idea behind the decision being to try to limit out of towners from coming to the county. However, I question that on a couple of fronts. For one thing, it seems like the majority of Covid cases that we've had so far are actually from locals going out of the county and coming back with the infection. Also, we're not the only area in the state that's reliant on business from out of towners. However, the majority of those areas have not imposed these lodging restrictions and there doesn't seem to be any evidence indicating that doing so has caused them to experience a higher rate of infections. Lastly, there are a couple of lodging businesses that are still doing business with guests that are deemed to be in "essential" categories. I'm specifically referencing the Best Western El Grande (Clearlake) that has tons of guests that appear to be construction workers, PG&E, AT&T, etc. Are we not worried about those out of towners? It feels like I'm being prejudiced against because my business is unable to secure that clientele.

To put the business side in perspective, my hotel is down to around 5% occupancy for the month of April. The same number for last year was around 60%. My business may not be able to survive much longer at the current level---and I'm sure that there are many other businesses in the same situation. Apart from the financial impact to my business, we have nine employees that are basically at zero income right now. As everyone is aware, the unemployment system has been very difficult to navigate.

Fortunately, the numbers in terms of Covid cases have been much lower than anticipated. I think we can remove the restriction on lodging facilities and still maintain caution in terms of Covid exposure risk. Our facility has taken extreme precautionary measures in how we do business to minimize the risk. At this point, we need to put some trust in the county's residents and business owners to make prudent decisions. We need to do this before it's too late!

Thanks,
Jay Waland
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