



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Jared Webley
Public Policy and Communications Manager
Office: (509) 477-2479
Cell: (509) 960-1082
jcwebley@spokanecounty.org

SPOKANE COUNTY SEEKS VARIANCE FROM GOVERNOR FOR PHASE 2

SPOKANE COUNTY, Wash. – Leading the way for other large counties in Washington State to safely re-open their economies, today the Spokane County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted in favor of accepting the recommendations of the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) to enter into Phase 2 of Governor Inslee’s COVID-19 Safe Start Washington Plan.

After the vote, a letter was signed and submitted to the Governor requesting immediate consideration for Spokane County to enter into Phase 2. Spokane County has the ability to test, do case and contact investigations, protect high-risk populations, and follow guidelines related to PPE, hand washing, sanitization, and education around proper etiquette for sneeze and cough protection. Spokane County joins the SRHD in the belief that our County meets all known criteria at this point and are ready and able to move into Phase 2.

In recent weeks, Spokane County has joined with other local governments, SRHD, medical community, non-profits, and the business community in adding additional resources towards efforts to charter a path to re-open our economy.

Four adjacent Counties, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Ferry, and Lincoln have already been allowed to enter Phase 2. The Spokane economy and those of neighboring Counties’ economies are intrinsically connected. With the relatively low numbers of infected cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in Spokane County attributed to COVID-19, allowing Spokane County to enter the same Phase as neighboring Counties is commonsensical.

Furthermore, Spokane County serves as the regional medical hub and patients who are hospitalized often reside from surrounding Counties. Even with this as a factor, the data and level of preparations that have been made indicate that now is an ideal time to enter into Phase 2. The Spokane County Board of Commissioners joins Dr. Bob Lutz, our Regional Health Officer, Health District Board, medical and business community, and the vast majority of citizens in our community in requesting Spokane County be granted a variance in moving to Phase 2 of the Governor’s Safe Start Washington Plan.

Al French, Chair of the Spokane County Board of Commissioners, stated, “As a region, we have done our part to effectively prepare and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Now is the time to rebuild. We have put our best case forward to have Governor Inslee join our regional effort, which includes five counties in Northeast Washington, to start our path to recovery. I look forward to receiving the approval from Governor Inslee’s Office this week as he sees that Spokane County is uniquely situated to safely restart our economy.”

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About Spokane County

Spokane County government serves over half a million citizens and 13 municipal jurisdictions, making it the fourth-largest county in the State of Washington. For more information, visit www.spokanecounty.org, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).