



April 24, 2020

I want to address the concerns from members of the City council and the residents on reopening businesses, as well as the citizens of Kalama who are being affected by the Corona Virus.

First of all, I would like to say that every elected official in the nation has ideas on how to combat this virus against the health and wellbeing of its citizens while minimizing its effects on the economy. These scenarios are being played out on all levels of government and every nation on earth.

I, myself, have been impacted by the changes in the economy for the last month. My employer has furloughed me to almost part-time employment status and my "better-half" has a hair salon that has been completely shut down for more than a month without any help from state or federal agencies. I do feel the need to push for an expedited timeline in order to get my financial life and the income of my household back on track. I see the Kalama business community suffering and I know the community is feeling the weight of this virus on their families and their business bottom line.

On the other hand, I can also understand why the governor is not certain on how and when to ramp up operations with so much at stake. Governor Inslee has noticed the recent spikes in Covid-19 cases located around the state and still has concerns with reopening the state too quickly, which could backfire and be even more devastating than the first go around. Then, we will not only have an outbreak that will cost lives, but we will have to do this shutdown all over again, and possibly for a lot longer timeframe to make sure that it is really over.

I do believe that the state of Washington, along with other states, has been unable to appropriately differentiate stores and activities which should be deemed essential and non-essential. The City Council, in conjunction with the Cowlitz Board of Commissioners, is currently petitioning Governor Inslee to relax restrictions specifically related to hunting, fishing and the construction industry.

Kalama is not a sovereign nation with its own laws that can supersede state or federal laws. We can only make laws or rules in addition too, but not less than laws enacted by governing bodies above Kalama's jurisdiction.

Kalama has declared a State of Emergency along with the other five cities located in Cowlitz County and has delegated authority to the Incident Management Structure. If Kalama willfully violated the Stay Home Stay Healthy order under the State of Emergency then the city would be potentially ineligible for support from the Incident Management Structure, the State of Washington or any federal agencies distributing resources.

People want to do the right thing when it comes to the safety of the community and their family, but it is also hard to be patient and stand by idly when you have so much to lose. I am asking the governor to provide the necessary funding needed to help get our small businesses back on track. They are vital to our community, and are suffering through no fault of their own.

We are too close to the end to stop the fight now; we are almost there. Remember, we are all in this together. Someday soon we will say, "Remember that virus in 2020? That was a hard year to go through. But we made it, and it brought us closer together than ever before, and gave us a brand-new appreciation for each other and the community that we live in."

WE ARE KALAMA STRONG.

Mike Reuter

Mayor of Kalama

