

# An Open Letter to the Governor of New Mexico

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

We are grateful for New Mexico's relatively low COVID-19 infection and death rates as compared to other states. We recognize this is a result of quick state and federal actions in the face of a sudden and significant public health emergency. We thank you for your hard work, will second-guess no decisions you have made to this point, and urge that everyone in the state comply with the guidance and direction we have been given while a plan for recovery is being sorted out. We write to you regarding how best to get our economy moving again quickly, because most New Mexicans believe the need to be dire.

New Mexico Business Coalition recently introduced its [New Mexico, Let's Get Back to Business](#) Plan and has received overwhelming support from across the state. We endorse its urgent call for a "safe, sensible and incremental" approach to reopening our economy, tailored to the specific needs of each of our communities. Lest we be accused of prioritizing profits over people, we want to be perfectly clear: our sole aim is to reduce the amount of human suffering and death in our state. You can't separate people from the economy or the economy from people; we believe that economists and epidemiologists alike have the same goal in mind, and it's a goal that we share: protecting the life and health of the people of New Mexico.

In that context, we were elected to represent the people of our communities, and the people of our communities are suffering mightily. We need to be as wise and deliberate as we are eager to get things moving again, but when unemployment numbers are skyrocketing, local businesses are shut down across the state, and the hospitals we're depending on to take care of us are furloughing employees and declaring bankruptcy, something's out of whack. We believe all of us as public officials must consider a broader perspective that takes into account the effects not only of the coronavirus, but of the quarantine as well.

The projection in the state's model anticipates [2,984](#) deaths over the next 12 months, many times greater than the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation which as of this writing [predicts](#) a fraction of the number of deaths and no shortage of hospital and ICU beds in New Mexico. What neither model addresses, however, are the number of people who are likely to die from suicide, alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, chronic health conditions, ER avoidance, postponed screenings (whose effects will show up downstream) and other maladies that will result from the quarantine itself. Further, neglecting to account for other damaging quarantine effects such as personal and business bankruptcies, child abuse, spousal abuse, depression, education interruptions and property crime is not being fair to the widespread suffering these issues are causing across all of our communities. Models focused on the virus alone are simply myopic.

We urge you and your team to consider all of the above factors as decisions are made about when, where and how we can safely, sensibly and incrementally resume economic normalcy, which is increasingly urgent. The people of our state are creative, responsible and capable of following best practices in helping to assure continued mitigation of the spread of the virus while resuming business activities that help them provide for their families as well as the families of their employees.

We must open up our state for business, as carefully as necessary but as quickly as possible. Lives depend on it.

Dale Janway  
Mayor, City of Carlsbad

Kris King  
Mayor, Village of Causey

Billy Elbrock  
Mayor, Village of Chama

Nathan Dial  
Mayor, Town of Estancia

Billy Hobbs  
Mayor, City of Eunice

Martin "Modey" Hicks  
Mayor, City of Grants

Andrew Nunez  
Mayor, Village of Hatch

Bill Fletcher  
Mayor, Village of Hope

Sherman Martin  
Mayor, Village of House

Barry Green  
Mayor, Village of Melrose

Victor Vigil  
Mayor, Village of Mosquero

Bryan Olguin  
Mayor, Town of Peralta

Linda Calhoun  
Mayor, Town of Red River

Boyd Herrington  
Mayor, Village of Encino

Dennis Kintigh  
Mayor, City of Roswell

Marilyn Burns  
Mayor, Town of Tatum

Jake Burton  
Mayor, Village of Tijeras

Ronald Jackson  
Mayor, City of Portales

Richard Rumpf  
Mayor, Village of Magdalena

## Individual Endorsements:

Richard Boss