



**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment

June 11, 2020

John Martin, Chair  
Mike Samson, Chair Pro Tem  
Tom Jankovsky, Commissioner  
Garfield County Board of Commissioners  
108 8th Street, Suite 101  
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Yvonne Long, Director  
Garfield County Public Health

RE: Garfield County Variance Request from portions of **Public Health Order 20-28**

Dear Commissioners and Director Long:

Thank you for your application to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) of a variance request to portions of **Executive Order D 20 044 Safer at Home** and **Public Health Order 20-28 Safer at Home**. I have had an opportunity to review your request for variances regarding public gatherings and large tourist attractions. This variance approval is limited to public gatherings and three of the four large tourist attractions, excluding the Glenwood Caverns Amusement Park; in all other respects, the requirements of the Safer at Home Executive Order and Public Health Order and your previously approved variance request remain in effect for Garfield County.

As stated in Appendix G to PHO 20-28, when reviewing a variance request, we evaluate the current prevalence of COVID-19 in the jurisdiction, including whether cases are increasing, stable, or decreasing. In reviewing Garfield County's current status with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, we note that the county has had 138 cases to date, with 23 of those cases occurring in the last two weeks, which is a two week incidence of 38 per 100,000. Your application describes a strong public health system in Garfield County, with effective disease investigation and surveillance, and partnership with local hospitals that have the capacity to provide care to ill individuals.

Your variance request is for up to 50 people in public gatherings, 30% capacity for the Iron Mountain Hot Springs, Glenwood Hot Springs, and Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, and Hanging Lake. Your requests for public gatherings and Hanging Lake are approved. We have concerns about the size of potential gatherings, which from the materials you supplied for one of the hot springs, could include almost 1000 people in the pools and 1500 on the grounds. Even

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at a 30% capacity, that would be 300 people in the pool and 450 on the grounds. You have provided thoughtful disease mitigation plans for these establishments; however, these numbers well exceed any variance that we have previously granted. For the Iron Mountain Hot Springs and Glenwood Hot Springs, in addition to what you have outlined in your variance application, the following requirements apply:

- Require 6 foot distancing between individuals, ensuring a minimum of 28 square feet per person,
- Limit occupancy to no more than 175 people, and
- Require the wearing of face coverings by those 3 and older when not in a pool or other water feature.

We also have concerns regarding the opening of any amusement parks in the state. Although outdoor settings are preferred from a mitigation of disease spread perspective, with the sheer volume of high touch surfaces such as park rides and the likelihood of constant mingling of non household contacts throughout the park, we are not currently approving any requests for amusement parks. The request to open Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park is not authorized to move forward at this time.

This variance approval is granted based on the facts and circumstances today as you have described them in your request. If the county were to exceed 60 new cases in two weeks, the variance is automatically rescinded. Additionally, we note that cases in Garfield have very recently increased, and we will be monitoring to determine if continuation of the variance at the medicum level is warranted. CDPHE reserves the right to modify or rescind this variance approval as circumstances warrant. This approval is in effect until the final expiration of PHO 20-28, which will be extended in some capacity beyond the current expiration date next week.

I appreciate your thoughtful approach to these challenging issues and wish you all the best in your continuing efforts to ensure that Garfield County residents are safe and healthy as we deal with this global pandemic. Garfield County is a valued partner, and we are available to answer any questions and work with you on these matters. Please give me a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH  
Executive Director