



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

June 3, 2020

Jeff Rector, Chair
Si Woodruff, Commissioner
Gary Moyer, Commissioner
Rio Blanco County Board of County Commissioners
Rio Blanco County Historic Courthouse
55 Main Street
P.O. Box 599
Meeker, CO 81641

Alice Harvey, Director
Rio Blanco County Department of Public Health and Environment

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

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your application to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) of a variance request to portions of **Public Health Order 20-28 Safer at Home**, as amended. I have had an opportunity to review your request for variances regarding public gatherings of up to 50 people, offices, retail, personal services, restaurants, bars, recreation, child care, real estate, houses of worship, gyms, and summer sports and youth activities. I have determined that the request is approved, with some amendments¹, as explained further below.

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. Your application addresses particular requirements that you propose as an alternative to the Safer at Home model for each of these areas. The data and information included in your request demonstrates that Rio Blanco has reported just 1 COVID-19 case with no cases in the last two weeks and sufficient hospital capacity to care for COVID-19 positive patients.

With respect to your specific requests retail, personal services, restaurants, bars, houses of worship and gyms, the following are approved:

¹ Your plan also includes information pertaining to “elective, medical and health services”. These services are subject to the requirements of Public Health Order 20-29 concerning voluntary and elective surgeries and procedures and cannot be approved for any variance.

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- In order to achieve 6 feet distancing the limit is 50% of the posted occupancy code limit ensuring a minimum 28 square feet per person not to exceed more than 175 people gathered in a confined indoor space at any given time, and not to exceed 250 in an outdoor space.
- For clarification concerning your request for a variance for bars, only bars that ensure access to food from a licensed retail food establishment for on-premise consumption are authorized to operate.

Regarding your request for a variance for offices, as offices can already operate at 50% capacity, they are not included in the above variance approval. Additionally, the activities described in your plan regarding summer sport and youth activities are included in the Fifth Amended Safer at Home Public Health Order 20-28 as authorized activities, so no variance is needed.

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 7 new cases in a week,, the variance is automatically rescinded. Additionally, 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 Rio Blanco County residents are safe and healthy as we deal with this global pandemic. Rio Blanco 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