



## Bedford County Commissioners' Office

---

COUNTY OF BEDFORD  
200 SOUTH JULIANA STREET  
BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA 15522

TELEPHONE: 814-623-4807 FAX: 814-623-0991

JOSH LANG, *Chairman*  
BARRY L. DALLARA, *Vice-Chairman*  
DEB BAUGHMAN, *Secretary*

DEBRA K. BROWN  
*Chief Clerk*

April 29, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Bedford County Board of Commissioners, Josh Lang, Barry Dallara and Deb Baughman, previously petitioned Governor Wolf to change the COVID-19 region Bedford County was assigned by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The County was initially included with counties to the East, some with many more confirmed cases of the virus. A more appropriate grouping would be the six counties currently known as the Southern Alleghenies Region, which already have formal partnerships that work together on economic development initiatives and EMS services. This region is comprised of Cambria, Somerset, Blair, Bedford, Huntingdon and Fulton counties. They believe the County should be part of a region that has similar demographics and very low COVID-19 infection statistics. As of the current date, 120 cases and 2 deaths have been recorded in this six-county region of almost 500,000 people.

The commissioners also petitioned Governor Wolf to allow Bedford County to move out of the Red Phase based on data that shows the County is ready to have some of the restrictions on work and social interaction lifted. While advocating for the best interests of county citizens, the commissioners continue to support the practice of taking all appropriate safety precautions outlined in the State's Department of Health guidelines. The ongoing pandemic is still a very serious health concern and requires vigilance.

The petition calls for the development of objective criteria which can be used to create a safe environment in every business. Stay at home restrictions can be carefully replaced with aggressive mitigation to begin re-starting the local economy. Bedford County citizens have learned a lot over the past month about how to distance themselves, how to protect themselves and others, and how to stay safe. With every person striving to adhere to best practices, residents can manage their risk and once again lead their own lives, without allowing COVID-19 to bring that to an end.

The commissioners would applaud the elimination of business guidelines that impose restrictions that result in winners and losers. It doesn't seem equitable that an ice cream stand can be open, but a small business installing pools cannot, if both can meet the required public health and safety standards. Today, you can make an in-person purchase of a house or a new vehicle in Ohio, Maryland and West Virginia, but not in Pennsylvania. The Yellow Phase of the Governor's plan allows for more in-person businesses to operate following strict safety orders, and we believe indicators show Bedford County is ready for that.

Lastly, the petition seeks support for rural hospitals and healthcare providers, so they are equipped to provide high levels of care during the ongoing pandemic. This includes the increased availability of tests and equipment in Bedford County.



## Bedford County Commissioners' Office

---

COUNTY OF BEDFORD  
200 SOUTH JULIANA STREET  
BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA 15522

TELEPHONE: 814-623-4807 FAX: 814-623-0991

JOSH LANG, *Chairman*  
BARRY L. DALLARA, *Vice-Chairman*  
DEB BAUGHMAN, *Secretary*

DEBRA K. BROWN  
*Chief Clerk*

April 27, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

We, the Bedford County Commissioners, are asking you to reexamine and revise your COVID-19 plan for Bedford County. We are petitioning you to:

### ***CHANGE THE REGIONAL DESIGNATION FOR BEDFORD COUNTY***

Bedford County is a misfit in the current regional designation. We are a rural county with a low population and very few cases of COVID-19. We do not belong with urban and suburban counties to our east who continue to increase cases in substantial numbers. We ask to be re-grouped with the six counties with whom we have an established formal partnership in the Southern Alleghenies Region and form the South-Central Mountains Regional Task Force Community- Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset. These counties represent a specific physical and environmental condition which has helped to mitigate the spread of the virus. As of the current date, 120 cases and 2 deaths have been recorded in this entire six-county region of almost 500,000 people. If the three-color phasing approach is to be applied by region, Bedford County must be allowed to be grouped with other similar counties.

### ***ALLOW BEDFORD COUNTY TO BE IN THE FIRST GROUP TO MOVE OUT OF THE RED PHASE***

Outbreaks have occurred in 41 identified long-term care facilities and personal care homes in Adams, Centre, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon and York. Yet, our local hospital has no one on ventilators and our long-term care facilities currently have no positive or probable cases of COVID-19 within their facilities. This clearly demonstrates the socio-geographic difference which stands between Bedford County and other more urbanite conveyance communities.

Citizens have learned a lot over the past month about how to distance themselves, how to protect themselves and others, and how to stay safe. With every person striving to adhere to best practices, we will once again live our own lives and not let COVID-19 bring that to an end.

Bedford County is the ideal positional leader to demonstrate successful community participation in positive mitigative strategies. We realize geography, population as well as community buy-in are the strengths needed to effectively turn the corner on slowly implementing the new normal in everyday life in the Commonwealth. Bedford County can demonstrate success by example; therefore, we ask to be the priority transitional model.

***GIVE EVERY BUSINESS IN BEDFORD COUNTY THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN AND OPERATE SAFELY***

Please eliminate guidelines that favor big box stores being open and small businesses being closed. Develop objective opening and operating safety guidelines that protect public health and allow all businesses the opportunity to meet those requirements. As a rural county, Bedford's economy depends on small businesses being able to provide in-person services based on the Governor's safety orders.

***SUPPORT OUR RURAL BEDFORD COUNTY HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS***

We are calling for the increased availability of tests and equipment to protect both service providers and citizens. Bedford County must be equipped for high levels of care during this pandemic.

We thank you for your continuing work to lead Pennsylvania through this emergency. As county officials, we ask for an open conversation with you and/or members of your staff via ZOOM or conference call about this matter. We look forward to receiving your response and working with you to mitigate COVID-19 in Bedford County and meet the needs of our community.

Sincerely,



Josh Lang, Chairman

  
Barry Dallara, Vice Chairman  
Deb Baughman, Secretary