



April 27, 2020

ORA encourages Governor DeWine to strongly consider giving restaurants two weeks notice and allow restaurants to begin to offer social distanced dine in service on May 15, 2020

Today Governor Mike DeWine provided further details about the reopening of Ohio's economy when the current Ohio Department of Health Director's Stay at Home order expires on May 1.

We know that COVID-19 is both a public health and economic crisis for our country, our state and our communities; and we appreciate the leadership that Governor DeWine and his Administration have shown in navigating Ohio through this crisis.

Much of Ohio's economy has been shut down by the Director's order, and Ohio's businesses and the people who work in them are hurting. Ohio's restaurants have been the most devastated, with the current restrictions on dine in service leading to more than 300,000 restaurant employees being laid off or furloughed and nearly 50% of all locations closed. The Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) recently detailed the [level of devastation to Ohio's restaurant and foodservice businesses](#).

Ohio restaurants, working closely and in partnership with the local health inspectors who regulate our industry, have always operated with an extreme focus on safety – food safety, employee safety and guest safety. Ohio restaurants are safely offering carryout, drive through and delivery, helping meet Ohioans food needs and offering a glimmer of relief and normalcy to our customers.

As Ohio businesses begin to reopen, restaurants are able to safely offer dine in service, with appropriate social distancing added to all of the procedures we will follow to keep our employees and our guests safe. As we move forward, the **ORA encourages Governor DeWine to strongly consider giving restaurants two weeks notice and allow restaurants to begin to offer social distanced dine in service on May 15, 2020**.

Every week that goes by will claim another percentage of restaurants that will never reopen, jobs that will disappear permanently, and communities that will be left without their local restaurants that are often the cornerstones of their downtowns and neighborhoods and fuel so much economic development. We are certain the federal relief offered in the CARES Act largely misses the mark for restaurants that are closed or operating at deeply diminished capacity, and with its restrictions we know the difference between May 15 and June 1 to reopen restaurants for dine in could be the difference between survival and shuttering for many Ohio restaurants.

Ohio's restaurants pledge to do everything in our power to operate with a heightened focus on health, hygiene, sanitization and safety – for our employees, our guests and our communities. We have already worked with our regulators, the local health sanitarians who regularly inspect restaurants, to produce recommended guidelines for reopening restaurants in Ohio, and the National Restaurant Association, with an expert panel, produced ["Reopening Guidance: A Guide for the Restaurant Industry"](#).

We will again be the cornerstones of our communities, providing essential jobs while helping revive Ohio's economic engine so our state can continue to offer the essential services necessary to so many. This is critical since restaurants produce 51% of all food sales.

Together we can get through this crisis and emerge stronger on the other side.