



NC Restaurant
& Lodging Association

February 15, 2021

Dear Governor Cooper,

We commend you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic—one of the most challenging times in our state’s history. The personal and business losses continue to take a devastating toll all across our state, but we are encouraged by the trends: decreasing positivity rates, fewer hospitalizations and fewer deaths. Most encouraging is the fact that 1.5 million North Carolinians—including those most vulnerable to severe illness—have been vaccinated to date. We are filled with hope and optimism as we know that many, many more North Carolinians will receive vaccines in the coming weeks.

In addition to the impacts on public health, businesses and individuals have experienced devastating economic pain and suffering during this pandemic, and this part of our state’s recovery cannot be left behind under restrictions as the rest of the economy now thrives. From March through November 2020, nearly 22,000 restaurants, bars and hotels have suffered a decline of \$4.19 billion in taxable sales. Nearly 75 percent of all jobs lost in our state during the pandemic have been in the leisure and hospitality sector. Today, 20 percent of our pre-pandemic workforce is still sidelined. As we approach the one-year mark of this pandemic, the NC hospitality industry is eager to begin its recovery.

NCRLA recently released a [Blueprint for Revival of the North Carolina Hospitality Industry](#). This plan, which was developed in concert with input from hundreds of business owners across the state, outlines important policy measures that can help support the recovery and revival of the hospitality sector. In addition to policy relief, it is critical that we get back to normal business operations as quickly as possible. Nearly a year of capacity limits, curfews and restrictions on alcohol service continue to take a devastating toll on our businesses, and we ask that you lift those when the current Executive Order expires on February 28.

We remain fully committed to following the established protocols for operating our businesses during COVID-19 with tables set six feet apart, limits on table sizes, face mask requirements for employees and guests, frequent handwashing, additional cleaning protocols, and daily health screenings for employees. We know that these measures will allow us to operate our businesses safely while continuing to keep both our employees and guests safe.

Again, we appreciate your leadership and commend you and your team for your ongoing work to protect lives, restore jobs, re-build businesses, and lead North Carolina’s recovery from this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Lynn D. Mingos
President & CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nishith “Nish” Patel, Chair
Beacon IMG, Inc.

Patrick Aiello
Ecolab

Jim Beley
The Umstead Hotel & Spa

Andy Clark
US Foods

Sheri Erhart
CMC Hotels

Dan Freeland
Concord Hospitality Enterprises

Phil Friedman
Salsarita’s Fresh Cantina

Tim Goss
Firehouse Subs

Doris Huebner
F & D Huebner, LLC

Burney Jennings
Biscuitville Fresh Southern

Russ Jones
Davidson & Jones

Scott Maitland
Top of the Hill Restaurant, Brewery
& Distillery

Amber Moshakos
LM Restaurants

Tom Pashley
Pinehurst Resort

Akshat Patel, ex-officio
Comfort Inn – Choice Hotels

Shaunak Patel
Parks Hospitality Group

Gonza Salamanca
Gonza Tacos Y Tequila

Tom Sasser
Burke Hospitality

Ian Sauer
Summit Hospitality Group, LTD

Billy Sewell
Platinum Corral, LLC

Jason Smith, Gov. Affairs Co-Chair
18 Restaurant Group

Doug Stafford
Griffin Stafford Hospitality, LLC

Steve Thanhauser
Angus Barn, Ltd.

Charles Thompson
The Inn on Biltmore Estate

Lance Trenary
Golden Corral Corporation

John Winkenwerder
South Asheville Hotel Associates, LLC

Vinay Patel, Gov. Affairs Co-Chair
SREE Hotels, LLC