



Willie Lightfoot Council Vice-President, Councilmember At-Large
Email: Willie.Lightfoot@cityofrochester.gov

December 3, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

You have shown tremendous leadership during this unprecedented time, and one of the hallmarks of your leadership has been your willingness to adapt to a changing environment. It is in the spirit of cooperation that I reach out to you to request thoughtful changes related to restrictions on the appearance enhancement industry. As President of the United Professional Barbers and Cosmetologists Association (UPBCA), I've reached out to your office earlier this year requesting additional support and guidance to shops and owners as they began the reopening process. I have since held training sessions, worked with businesses to get proper safety equipment and PPE, and worked to help shops comply with the important guidance put out by the state and local health departments.

Our compliance with these regulations have kept our customers safe, as there has been no viral spread linked to barber shops or beauty salons locally. Unfortunately, these same shops and salons located in Orange Zones, once again, have been shut down. These designations severely and disproportionately affect black and brown microbusinesses and are occurring during our most profitable time, the holiday season. As Governor of New York State, if you fail to change regulations impacting these businesses, there will be negative implications compounded by the systemic and institutional racism that allows black and brown businesses owners to all too often fall through the cracks. We believe that the new designations for shops in "Orange Zones" exacerbate already present disparities which is inequitable and wrong. Our customers are going to other shops in "Yellow Zones" that are often times just minutes away. Many shops have spent significant funds to reopen and continue to follow the guidance put out by the state, but we are failing many of our struggling businesses, many of which are minority owned, with these closures.

We believe the decision to close the appearance enhancement industry is not based on data, our own Monroe County Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Michael Mendoza, has stated that private gatherings have been the primary cause of spread for COVID-19. We have a growing petition with over 700 signatures calling on your administration to reexamine this policy, and allow businesses like ours, to continue to operate. It would



be more impactful if there were targeted closures of businesses linked to viral spread, and in turn, more educational resources and PPE dedicated to businesses reopening.

Our industry is at a tipping point, and many people stand to lose their livelihoods. On behalf of UPBCA and all those locally in the appearance enhancement industry, I implore you to allow our shops to reopen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Willie J. Lightfoot". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Willie J. Lightfoot

CC: Lovely A. Warren, Mayor City of Rochester
Adam J. Bello, Monroe County Executive
Robert J. Duffy, CEO, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce