

# City of Hesperia

## STAFF REPORT



**DATE:** October 20, 2020

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Nils Bentsen, City Manager

**BY:** Rachel Molina, Deputy City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Support of Recognizing the County of San Bernardino by Sub-region for the Purposes of Reopening the Economy Under California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy and Making the Reopening Process More Stable and Predictable

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt Resolution 2020-68 in support of recognizing the County of San Bernardino by sub-region for the purposes of reopening the economy under California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy and making the reopening process more stable and predictable.

### BACKGROUND

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued a stay at home order and designated certain businesses and faith-based organizations as non-essential, prohibiting them from normal operations. Those businesses deemed essential by the State of California were allowed to operate with modifications that provide for social distancing and increased disinfection procedures, as appropriate.

On August 28, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a new framework entitled Blueprint for a Safer Economy (Blueprint), to allow for a "safe progression of opening up more businesses in each county so impacts of any given change can be fully evaluated." The Blueprint required counties to meet identified benchmarks in positivity rates in order to move into less-restrictive tiers.

On September 7, 2020, Governor Newsom announced an adjustment to the Blueprint, to include a benchmark on overall testing rates Countywide to achieve reopening abilities. The case rate is now adjusted based on testing volume per 100,000 population and if a county does not meet the State's median threshold, its case rate is adjusted by a specific factor resulting in a penalization of that county. Currently, the statewide testing rate average is a non-fixed moving target.

### ISSUES/ANALYSIS

The Governor's adjustments to the Blueprint and changes to stated goals and objectives in addressing COVID-19 hinder the ability of the City of Hesperia and County of San Bernardino to manage the crisis, requiring responsible agencies to change course, reprioritize, and reposition their strategies resulting in lost time, financial strain and inconsistent messaging to the public. The frequently changing goals, objectives and metrics for reopening have created a burden on residents, parents and schools, and the business community. Moreover, prolonged closures of several sectors has been devastating to local businesses as many have made significant

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investments to comply with reopening guidelines only to have those guidelines changed and reopening delayed or postponed indefinitely, often times without advanced warning.

The County of San Bernardino (County) has made significant efforts to comply with State of California guidelines and mandates in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. The County has continued to reinforce the importance of health directives and has made significant investments in testing and tracing capacity as well as worked closely with state officials on containment at State-regulated skilled nursing facilities. The County has also made funding available to local businesses and residents that have suffered economic hardship related to the COVID-19 closures and related economic downturn.

The City of Hesperia is requesting that the State of California make the process counties follow to reopen more stable and predictable. The City further requests that the State of California recognize the County of San Bernardino by sub-region, allowing communities within the County that have experienced historically low positivity rates to reopen. The County of San Bernardino is the largest county in the United States and geographically diverse, home to considerably lower density communities than in many counties in California. If considered independently of more densely population communities in the County of San Bernardino, Hesperia would likely qualify for reopening under either the Orange or Yellow tier of the Blueprint.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Provide alternative direction to staff

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

Resolution 2020-68