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To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Enquiry from Region website
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 2:53:41 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 22 July 2020 14:53:36 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Cc: webincoming
Subject: Online Form - Enquiry from Region website

Enquiry from Region website

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name

Derek Jones

phone

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subject

Regional Council - Mask By-law Letter of support

comments

Dear Clerk, please add the following correspondence for Thursday's Council meeting in support of a Regional Mask By-law Dear Councillors, I am writing in full support for wearing of masks and passing a by-law that supports the health and well-being of Niagara residents. I firmly believe this should be a Regional effort. And now that more Municipalities have approved masks, I encourage the Region to take a leading role, for all the right reasons. I watched the last Niagara Region meeting and debate on the subject, and

one of the questions raised was "Why now?" Why now? Science suggests we're still crushing the curve. Now what we have to do, is crush this virus. That means continuing to be vigilant and using every tool we have to succeed in that critical goal. And if anyone is hoping that an effective vaccine is just around the corner, science says it's still awhile away, although there has been some promising new developments in just the last couple of days. Until there is an effective vaccine, we must use every possible tool we have to mitigate the unprecedented effects of this virus. Washing our hands, physical distancing, and wearing masks where and when it's appropriate. From the very beginning of this devastating pandemic we have been advised to use "an abundance of caution", while many have paid the ultimate sacrifice, lost jobs, homes, and their lives. It frankly makes no sense to not continue our vigilance, as we are far from over this scourge. It makes no sense to gamble with lives, "hoping" we have his beat. We are not done. The virus is still here. All we need to do is look at the very clear examples of of States that have opened up too soon, misguidedly and recklessly, to devastating effect. While Niagara has been trending in the right direction, we also need to look closely at trends of opening too soon in other communities, without proper guidance or safety measures. For that is our roadmap on what works, and what obviously has not. Ontario's current numbers are 38,107 confirmed cases and 2,755 deaths, second Nationally behind Quebec. Some have suggested we have now "pivoted". In my estimation, we are not pivoting, that is not an accurate way to frame this. We are re-opening in stages based on best expert medical advice. Wearing masks will become absolutely crucial as we enter stage 3 reopening. It seems obvious that wearing masks can only help us achieve our goal of re-opening faster, successfully and safely. This will be of critical importance as indoor spaces, many with inadequate ventilation, begin to open again. There is clear science and advice from medical experts that wearing masks help to protect everyone, and helps to mitigate the spread of the virus. It's not only science, but common sense. No one is looking to throw someone in jail for not wearing a mask. It's about sending a positive message, like "stay healthy", I care about you. Masks work to protect everyone, not just the individual wearing it. Te repeated argument against masks suggesting that it's too difficult to enforce is completely ridiculous. It's no more difficult than enforcing social distancing, which everyone already accepts as a sound strategy. So there is no additional burden on enforcement than what already exists. They work in tandem. To educate those who still may be ignorant or unaware. Education is key. I can see no valid reason for not supporting a Regional mask by-law. It's imperative to our recovery as a Region in what is an ongoing pandemic. I would also like to share some personal perspective on why I firmly support wearing masks. I have an Immune Disorder, Diabetes, and have had problems with asthma since I was a kid. So I take precautions to avoid contracting this virus, so I can stay healthy, be here to take care of my kids, and my Father who is now in his 80's and disabled. When I go to a store, or anywhere where distancing is not possible, I wear a mask. It does not restrict my breathing. These are things that are in my control. What is not in control, is economic collapse, and it's disastrous

effects. In April, after 20 years with the same Employer and faithfully serving many clients throughout Niagara, my job was suddenly terminated due to the pandemic. At that time, I reached out to my Landlord (Niagara Regional Housing) to request assistance, and inquire about rent subsidies or other options available. In the mean time, I have continued to pay rent on time throughout the pandemic. To my utter shock, just over a week ago, I received an eviction notice from NRH. Now I'm both unemployed, and facing eviction. To say this is truly overwhelming, is an understatement. This pandemic has changed everything for so many in such a short time, and has completely exposed how vulnerable our society is, especially in the face of a global pandemic. This is especially true for those of us struggling to get by. As you might be able to appreciate with this context, from my perspective, I'm looking at what appears to be rapid systemic societal collapse. We need positive, decisive leadership now more than ever. We need to be addressing more urgent issues, including a looming rental and affordable housing crisis (that I wrote to the Region about back in April), rather than unnecessarily prolonging a debate about masks. Thank you. Regards, Derek Jones
Niagara Falls

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