

Chair & County Health Officer,

Dr. Charles Stringham

Board Members,

Ken Tipton, County Commission Chair

Marlene Brissenden, County Commissioner

Jim French, County Commissioner

Ron Cerri, County Commissioner

Mike Bell, County Commissioner

Mike Allen, Humboldt County Sheriff

Humboldt County Health Board

Humboldt County Courthouse
50 West Fifth Street Room 205
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445



July 27, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nicole Maher, PIO
Humboldt County Health Board
Phone: (775) 761-2624
Email: nicole@winnemucca.net

NEVADA WALKS BACK HUMBOLDT COUNTY BAR CLOSURES FOLLOWING LOCAL APPEAL

WINNEMUCCA, Nev— The State of Nevada has green-lighted bars in Humboldt County to reopen effective 5 p.m. Monday, July 27.

The decision comes after the Humboldt County Board of Commissioners and the Winnemucca Mayor and City Council appealed Governor Steve Sisolak's July 10 decision to close bars.

While officials said they concur with the State of Nevada's efforts to mitigate risk from COVID-19, they disagreed that Humboldt County has an elevated disease transmission and therefore asked that Humboldt not be included among the seven counties deemed at highest risk.

Humboldt County Manager Dave Mendiola said local bars were forced to close based on two data points: average number of daily tests and daily positivity rate.

"We completely agreed that Humboldt County falls short of the state's required number of daily tests," said Mendiola. "We simply do not have enough population or enough need right now to support 27 tests a day."

However, Mendiola said after involving Winnemucca City Manager Alicia Heiser in an in-house analysis, Humboldt County found its daily positivity rate of 5 percent to 7 percent was starkly different from the state's reported rate of 22 percent.

"So that was really the crux of our argument," said Mendiola. "We wanted to better understand the discrepancy between the percent reported by the Governor's Office and our internally reported number," he said.

Mendiola said after the state reviewed the data presented by the county, Nevada COVID-19 Response Director Caleb Cage called with an apology—which Mendiola said pleased local officials.

"While we understand the state's policy actions to help limit the spread of the virus, we believe our county meets all the criteria for remaining in Phase 2," he said.

"We have been seeing a very slight uptick in our cases, which we will continue to monitor, but with a low number of active cases, and no current hospitalizations, we feel confident we are headed in the right direction."

Additionally, Mendiola said Humboldt County has cultivated its resources and knowledge over the past months to prepare in the event cases do begin to rise.

Governor Sisolak hosted a press conference Monday evening, during which he excused Humboldt County from the bar closure list.

Mendiola said all businesses in Humboldt County, including local bars, know what they need to do to help customers and staff stay safe.

“We had a two-fold goal in this: We wanted to ensure the integrity of our data, and we wanted to stand up for businesses that are trying to do the right things.”

Mendiola continued, “We have not had one case originate from a bar—let alone a business—and we wanted to make it clear that Humboldt County continues to be a team player in this fight.”

Business owners may direct any questions regarding their business reopening or operation with relation to COVID-19 to the Humboldt County Manager’s Office at (775) 623-6300, or via email at COVID19@humboldtcountynv.gov.

###