



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE HOUSE
PO BOX 098
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0098
(609) 847-3400

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Philip D. Murphy
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

We recognize the incredibly difficult challenges you face every day as our beloved state battles the COVID-19 crisis. We have and remain supportive of you and your administration as we go through this trying time together.

Your decision to close our state and county parks, however, is wrong for public health and our state's residents. Your complete closure of parks appears to be based purely on anecdote and without any data or health science to support that decision. As you have repeatedly observed, access to fresh air and exercise for our citizenry, especially during this stressful time, is paramount. For that reason, safely and responsibly using our state's open spaces should continue to be encouraged, not prohibited.

Our citizens are sacrificing their livelihoods, their connections with friends and loved ones, their recreation, and, in short, their lives as they have come to know them, to do their part to fight this disease. They have done so largely willingly, or at least without great protest, understanding that public health exigencies might dictate temporary collective action led by our state government. In short, we are doing our part. Public health priorities and individual liberties are not always at odds, however.

Respectfully, Governor, you should trust us more. We are fully capable of making intelligent, common-sense, and responsible choices that permit us to both to meet our obligations to the fight against COVID-19 and use our state and county park resources for our physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

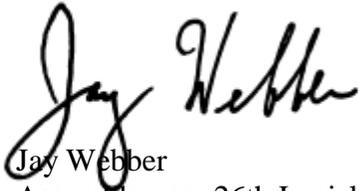
We see no reason why state and county parks cannot remain open, with appropriate social distancing and other common-sense measures kept in place. Break up and prevent use of the parks that violate those guidelines, as you should. Keep state restrooms and facilities closed, we understand. But do not close the parks altogether.

Gov. Phil Murphy
April 7, 2020
Page 2.

The state of New York has not closed its state parks, even though it has been hit harder by the virus than we. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has not closed its parks, even though it shares an extensive border with us. The state of Delaware to our south has not closed its parks. Not even the state of California has closed all of its state parks. We live in the most densely populated state in the Union, and our open space is too precious to us to have it taken away arbitrarily, especially in a time of crisis.

Please rescind Executive Order 118 closing the parks immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Webber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay Webber
Assemblyman, 26th Legislative District