

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925



Dear Governor Hogan,

On behalf of the restaurant industry I would like to thank you for your leadership during this pandemic. Our industry has been encouraged by your willingness to keep Maryland open for business, however we continue to struggle as consumers remain tentative and are not supporting restaurants anywhere near pre-COVID levels.

As this pandemic continues to wear on, more and more restaurants are left with the difficult choice of trying to remain open or closing permanently. Also affected are over 100,000 employees who have had their work hours drastically reduced or have been laid off. We are projecting that up to 40% of all the restaurants in Maryland will close permanently if the negative impacts of this pandemic continue through the fall season.

In an effort to highlight restaurants as safe and to encourage dining out, the Restaurant Association of Maryland is producing a statewide Restaurant Week from September 18 – 27, 2020. Restaurants from across the State will be featuring menu items and offering specials as incentives for diners to return. Restaurants desperately need diners to return to patronizing their establishments regularly and this Restaurant Week is an effort to jump start that process.

We are requesting that the State offer a “sales tax holiday” on restaurant food and beverage sales and also on alcoholic beverages purchased from restaurants during this Restaurant Week timeframe.

Consumers respond positively to sales tax holidays, and in the current economic climate these savings will be even more well received. Such a sales tax holiday will likely encourage more people to support restaurants through both dine-in and take-out options.

We ask for your support of Maryland Restaurant Week and the authorization of a sales tax holiday to help incentivize Marylanders to patronize restaurants during this time. As with other sales tax holidays, the increase of traffic in restaurants will spill over to other industries – specifically retail.

A sales tax holiday will not only benefit the restaurant industry, but the State economy as a whole.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "mllsja".

Marshall Weston Jr.
President & CEO
Restaurant Association of Maryland