



# MEDIA RELEASE

## San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 2, 2020

### **GOVERNOR INSLEE PUTS HOLD on ALL PHASE ADVANCING**

July 2, 2020: Today Governor Inslee announced that a minimum of a two week hold will be placed on all current applications to advance through the Governor's four phase plan. The earliest possible date of potential review will be July 16<sup>th</sup>. This decision applies to San Juan County's application to Phase 3 submitted to the State on June 25th, in addition to current applications from a number of other counties.

Once posted, details on the Governor's announcement [will be available at this link](#).

While this decision prolongs ongoing economic challenges for employers and employees of many local businesses, it is based on increasing case volumes across WA and the country, and the need to ensure that reopening is safe, thoughtful, and based on current data on disease transmission.

San Juan County Health Officer Dr. Frank James shares his thoughts on the Governor's decision, "When we submitted our application to move to Phase 3 last week, we genuinely felt that San Juan County was prepared to respond effectively to cases in the islands. We also understand that this is a fast moving situation and that the Governor prioritizing a safe reopening for the entire state is a logical choice at this time. Like so much in this crisis, these decisions are difficult and finding the right path is an enormous challenge."

As Dr. James explains, "We can't underestimate this disease. It has the ability to overwhelm our healthcare infrastructure in weeks, as we're currently seeing in other states. Our very best tool to avoid that outcome is covering our faces in public- we know for a fact that this works and is a proven way to drastically reduce disease spread. In addition, we need to be thoughtful about our plans to travel, socialize, and in particular interact indoors with those from outside our households. And of course hand washing and staying home when sick matter as well. We all have a role to play."

San Juan County Council Chair Rick Hughes highlights the difficulty of the situation, "I am sympathetic to those in our community whose livelihoods are threatened by the economic impacts of COVID. At the same time, we always want to put the health and safety of the islands first and foremost. Clearly safely moving to Phase 3 would have been a positive step forward, but I also understand and support the logic of the Governor's decision."

In addition to the Governor's decision about Phase status, he also strengthened requirements around face covering which in many ways mirror requirements that had already been in place in San Juan County.

All existing Phase 2 restrictions and limits placed on businesses and individuals by both WA State and San Juan County will remain in place at this time.