

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

November 5, 2020

Dear County Council Members,

I am writing today to provide testimony on Executive Order No. 122-20 as it relates to proposed limitations on gatherings at all county locations and venues.

As both a Montgomery County resident and a facilities manager within its Parks Department as a facilities manager to two event centers, I respectfully request you reconsider reducing the limitations on gatherings from 50 people down to 25. As I am sure almost everyone who is writing and recording testimonies to you are already expressing, our biggest hopes are that we all can remain vigilant in providing as many strategies and protections against the spread of COVID-19 as possible — and that we can return to some semblance of normalcy as soon as possible. My hope is that you will continue to allow our Parks Department facilities to continue to offer those hopes to our patrons, visitors, and employees.

While many events at our facilities have been either cancelled or postponed due to capacity limitations during COVID-19, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that clients who had their events scheduled before the pandemic hit in March could reschedule for the fall. This includes several weddings that have had to reschedule their date numerous times, and in some cases have had to deal with significant financial strain when various vendors were unable to provide refunds or postponements for services already produced or provided.

Since the pandemic, our venues have instituted numerous COVID-19 protocols in order to maximize safety for all. We have enforced the requirement for all guests to wear face masks/shields while at our facilities, to maintain proper social distance guidelines, limit indoor and seating capacities during all receptions, and ensured that our event staff adhere to strict and thorough cleaning procedures before, during, and after each event. We have also required all clients to provide us with a full attendance list of guest and vendor names for contract tracing. Our staff has and will continue to work hard to uphold these safety protocols.

Both our staff and our clients have and are continuing to work extremely hard to help reduce guest capacities to under 50 people during the pandemic. Our wedding couples have sacrificed greatly to lower guest counts that were once as high as 120 to less than 50 people. We have also coordinated with our clients' contracted vendors as well to guarantee that they abide by these same protocols and precautions.

I understand and appreciate your continued diligence in continuing to provide a safe environment for all of us in Montgomery County. I only ask that you allow those who are scheduled to hold events in the next month (and have already endured multiple reschedules) the opportunity to hold them at the current 50-person limit. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Ryan Fernandez

Facility Manager

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Montgomery Parks | The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission