



# BEAUFORT, SC

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**Ian Scott, President/CEO**  
*Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce*

November 23, 2020

The Honorable Billy Keyserling  
Mayor, City of Beaufort  
1911 Boundary Street  
Beaufort, SC 29902

Dear Mayor Keyserling:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Beaufort Regional Chamber, I encourage City Council to extend the emergency ordinance mandating that face coverings be worn in publicly accessible buildings across the City. I also urge Council not to put the burden of mask policy enforcement on businesses owners.

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on families and businesses across the community over the past nine months. Positive news from vaccine trials brings hope that a return to normalcy is on the horizon. But until a vaccine is widely distributed, the virus remains a threat to public health and our economy.

To bridge that gap, we must remain vigilant and continue all practical strategies to control the virus and keep businesses open and operating. Masking is a pragmatic tool to help mitigate infection and should be continued throughout the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Empirical evidence from state and federal health agencies shows correlation between mask mandates and decreased transmission rates of Covid-19. In Beaufort County, the rate of community spread slowed significantly in the months after municipalities adopted mask mandates. Lower transmission rates help ensure adequate hospital capacity to care for critically ill patients.

Polling indicates that a large majority of Americans remain concerned about contracting Covid-19. Masking ordinances, along with social distancing and other mitigation measures, give people confidence to participate in the economy and support local businesses.

It is in the best economic and public health interest of the region to do everything possible to keep transmission rates low while keeping business open. Wearing face coverings in publicly accessible buildings supports those goals.

Thank you for your clear policy and consistent messaging in support of mask wearing. We urge council to reinstitute the temporary ordinance mandating face coverings inside publicly accessible buildings.

Sincerely,

Ian D. Scott  
President & CEO  
Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce

cc: Ben Coppage, Phil Cromer, Mike McFee, Stephen Murray, Bill Prokop, Nan Sutton