



Chartered by United Food & Commercial Workers International Union
UFCW Building, 7760 West 38th Avenue, Suite 400
Wheat Ridge, Colorado 80033-9982
Phone 303-425-0897 • Toll Free CO & WY 800-854-7054
Fax 303-424-2416 • <http://www.ufcw7.org>
Facebook: UFCWLocal7R • Twitter: @UFCW_7 • Instagram: UFCW_LOCAL_7

KIM C. CORDOVA
President

KEVIN R. SCHNEIDER
Secretary-Treasurer

May 14, 2020

Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Bldg.
200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Mandatory Face Coverings in Grocery Stores

Dear Governor Polis:

First, let me express the appreciation of the roughly 23,000 workers that we represent in the State of Colorado for your efforts in combating the COVID-19 virus and your efforts to safeguard our members' health at a variety of facilities, varying from meat processing to retail grocers to healthcare facilities, among others.

While no efforts can insulate any segment of our population completely from the impacts of this virus, we have appreciated the collaborative effort, which we have been involved in. That being said, however, there still remains one issue, which is of great concern to our some 17,000 grocery workers. We recognize and thoroughly appreciate your Executive Order from April 17 directing the CDPHE to issue a Public Health Order requiring workers in grocery stores, among other facilities, to wear cloth face coverings while working. As the Public Health Order expires at 11:59 p.m. on May 17, we respectfully request you mandate that it be extended, or include workers in a broader order encompassing all entrants into retail grocery establishments.

As you know, many localities and counties have issued face mask orders, of varying specificity and effect, with regard to customers entering retail groceries. Thus, for instance, Denver and Boulder Counties, Larimer County, Routt County, Summit County and a variety of municipalities such as Aspen, Boulder, Erie, Estes Park, Glenwood Springs, Lone Tree, Loveland, Superior, and Wheat Ridge have all issued orders attempting to deal with this issue.

Unfortunately, enforcement is not a hallmark of these orders – and we continue to receive reports of shoppers entering stores without the required face masks even in municipalities and counties with such orders. This, of course, is a substantial health risk, not just to their fellow customers, but to our members and all retail grocery employees. We are aware of at least 64 of our

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grocery members that have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, one of whom has, sadly, passed away. There are several others in either critical care or on respirators.

Under the circumstances, it seems imperative there is uniformity of enforcement, not just in localities or counties where a face mask order may be in theoretical effect, but throughout the State of Colorado. Failing a *uniform* policy with regard to masks, it seems apparent that lessening the spread of the virus will be negatively affected. Certainly, we are not unmindful of the fact that some individuals simply do not wish to wear masks – however, that right needs to be balanced with the right of our members and the general public to be free, as best as possible, from possible infection.

The issuance of an Executive Order mandating that customers, employees, and other entrants, including suppliers or vendors, in all retail grocery facilities wear masks has the beneficial impact of ensuring that these municipal or county orders are not administered on an *ad hoc* basis – this eliminates questions and concerns regarding the actual scope and intent of the orders, insulates retail grocers from adverse feedback from some potentially-disgruntled customers, establishes a uniform regularity concerning enforcement, and far most importantly, will help “slow the spread” which is in everyone’s best interest. The *de minimis* inconvenience of wearing a mask for a shopping trip pales aside the positive impact on public and employee health in retail groceries.

You have not hesitated to lead where necessary in combating the virus – while we applaud efforts to “open” the State in measured terms, we truly need your leadership here with regard to a requirement that all retail grocery customers and other visitors wear masks upon entering the stores. Nothing could be more in the interest of the common good than a simple straightforward Executive Order to that effect.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and am certainly willing to talk further with you or your executive staff as to how we might best accomplish our common goals of re-opening our state’s businesses *while* safeguarding our members and the citizens of Colorado.

Respectfully,



Kim C. Cordova
UFCW Local 7 Union President
UFCW International Vice President

cc: Eve Lieberman
Lisa Kaufmann
Patrick Teegarden