

Governor Lamont and Connecticut State Officials,

Thank you for taking the time to read our document. To understand the challenges you have faced as you navigate these uncharted waters through this COVID-19 pandemic would be futile, but please know, your thoughtful leadership – and most likely many sleepless nights – is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this document is to show that Connecticut swimming pools – Indoor and Outdoor – can be opened in a safe and healthy manner and can operate in a purposeful way, with limited capacity and adherence to at least three levels of published guidelines. We recognize the importance of these guidelines and pledge to operate our aquatic facilities and youth aquatic programs accordingly.

To begin, it is scientifically known and supported by the CDC and NIH that the COVID-19 virus cannot be spread in properly maintained pools – e.g. pools treated with chlorine and bromine. All Connecticut pools are required to show that these treatment protocols are in place and verified by the Pool Supervisor required by the local Board of Health and listed on the Pool Permit. This link of [Recommended Operating Procedures](#) is a compilation of what we are seeing across the country and is only meant as recommendation.

These links from the [CDC](#) and [United States Swimming](#) have put together extensively detailed guidelines which include acceptable ways to position swimmers limited within lanes as well as with cleaning. Pools have professional and certified staff: Aquatic Directors, Pool Supervisors, Swim Coaches, Lifeguards and often Certified Pool Operators (CPO) on site and should be allowed to open in compliance with these guidelines. These knowledgeable staff personnel will be able to enforce all guidelines and treatment protocols to protect the health and safety of those that visit such facilities. At this point in time, we know of 18 states are allowing a safe return to community pool swimming with Massachusetts being the latest to do so with a June 8 opening date.

Furthermore, this letter represents a large contingent of swimmers throughout the state of Connecticut – Connecticut Swimming, Inc. and The Fairfield County Swim League are the groups leading the charge but are only a tip of the iceberg when you consider the number of facilities and programs throughout the state that include – but not limited to: CT Masters Swimming, the summer swim leagues of New Haven and Hartford areas, independent swim instruction businesses as well as the YMCA and YWCA, Boy's and Girl's Clubs to name but a few. These groups alone between swim lessons, swim teams, lap swimming, diving, water polo, aquacise and of extreme importance – lifeguard training, represent upwards of 50,000+ involved in some sort of aquatic activity. (Omitted in this number count are those in a camp environment.)

Economically the impact is immense. Whether public or private, closed facilities means memberships and/or aquatic program fees are not being paid resulting in unemployment – this includes year round and seasonal fees. Lost monthly revenue and wages is well into the millions and during the prime summer swim season, the number continues to rise. Many programs are currently hanging on by a thread in hopes that they will be up and operational in some sort of capacity this summer. One of the largest swim/aquatic programs in the state used the term “financial devastation” in describing their position today.

Another concern - and one that is a challenge to measure - is how much of an increase in drownings will we see? It is known for children under the age of 5 that the number one cause of death is drowning also stated by this link from the [CDC](#). Unsupervised beaches, lakes, ponds, quarries will become a haven for people to “sneak in” and swim. Private pool construction and usage is already on the upswing. How many of these private home pools will now become the place to go and draw more people than can handle with no proper supervision. Swimmers – competitive and lap - are a unique bunch and will do whatever they can to find space to swim, and we do not mean to just play in the water.

For the young children, teens and adults, the lack of structure that swimming offers is of great importance and proven to help ease anxiety and depression - currently a real and sobering issue.

We present this letter knowing our information is accurate, and to help with the Connecticut Re-open process. The experience within the aquatic world exceeds 100 years. Thank you for your consideration and know we are available to aide in any way possible. Please let us know if you are available for a Zoom conversation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen P Johnston
General Chair
CT Swimming, Inc./
Head Coach
Water Rat Swim Team
Westport Weston Family Y
(203) 209-1098

Megan Kelly
President
Fairfield County
Swim League
(203) 585-4919

Nick Cavaturo
Head Coach
Greenwich YWCA
(914) 438-9115