

October 14, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor
State of New York
Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We write to you today as the Executive Committee of the Global Cinema Federation (GCF), a worldwide grouping of major cinema operators and internationally-active trade bodies representing cinema exhibition's global interests. On behalf of the GCF, we would like to thank you and your staff for your tireless work and leadership throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Given the progress the State of New York has made in combating the pandemic and the additional steps exhibitors are taking to keep their patrons and staff safe, we humbly ask that you reconsider your decision to keep movie theaters in the State closed.

We recognize your commitment to ensuring that the citizens of New York remain safe and protected from COVID-19. With certain zip codes in New York seeing spikes of the virus, we are, of course, not suggesting that you open the entire state at once. We are, however, requesting that you adopt a plan similar to that in California, where Governor Newsom has allowed openings on a county-by-county basis according to virus data.

Along with our partners at the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), the GCF has been working with the exhibition community to develop and implement guidelines to create the safest possible environment for moviegoers around the World.

As we are sure you are aware, NATO's [CinemaSafe protocols](#) for movie theaters have been vetted and approved by leading epidemiologists for their ability to minimize the risk of transmission, requiring that proper social distancing is observed at all times and that patrons wear masks or other facial coverings when not consuming food and beverage products, as well as reducing auditorium capacity, improving HVAC systems, and many other measures. With these guidelines in place, evidence strongly suggests that the movie-going experience is safer than other activities such as indoor dining or attending religious services.

In fact, according to the study titled, "[Quantitative assessment of the risk of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 Infection: Prospective and retrospective applications](#)" by doctors G. Buonanno, L. Morawska and L. Stabile, a silent person emits 14 times less potentially infectious particles than a person who is speaking and 90 times less than a person who is singing or loudly speaking. Within the environment of a cinema, moviegoers are silent, unlike diners who chat over their meal, or churchgoers who pray and sing. Furthermore, according to the scientists, even in a small indoor setting, it would take approximately 192 minutes (or over 3 hours) for an infected patient to contaminate the space if the patient is sedentary. The risk is further diminished in a large well-ventilated movie theater auditorium where guests are facing one direction, wearing masks and not speaking.

Moreover, as of today, there are no reported cases associated with cinemas, despite the fact that cinemas in countries like Korea, Japan, and Sweden remained open for most of the initial period of the pandemic and the additional fact that in different countries and in different parts of the United States, cinemas have been open for three to four months since lockdowns were lifted. The study, "[What settings have been linked to SARS-CoV-2 transmission clusters? \[version 2; peer review: 2 approved\]](#)" by Quentin



J. Leclerc, Naomi M. Fuller, Lisa E. Knight, CMMID COVID-19 Working Group, Sebastian Funk, and Gwenan M. Knight analyzed 200 cases of massive infection and none were related to a cinema. Additionally, Leclerc, Fuller and Knight are part of the team behind [covid19settings.blogspot, which](#) has compiled over 1,500 cases of massive infections around the globe - none of which are related to a cinema operation.

Despite this data and the proactive steps of the CinemaSafe protocols, one challenge remains: access to new film product. The State of New York is an important market for the exhibition industry, not only in the United States but also around the World. With New York's theaters shuttered for nearly seven months and no indication of when they will be allowed to reopen, the studios that supply new movies have been reluctant to release their latest films to the point where almost no new major films will be released globally until 2021 and beyond. Without new movies to play in our cinemas, many members of the global exhibition community will be forced to close their doors again. Many of these companies will not survive.

On August 19 you said, "Movie theaters, I think, are next." More than a month later, there is still no clear path for movie theater reopenings in New York. This state of limbo, with no set reopening plans or dates, is what is scaring the studios away from releasing their films this year. Our industry employs hundreds of thousands of people throughout the World, all of whom are eager to get back to work and entertain their customers in a safe environment. It is genuinely no exaggeration to say that the continued closure of cinemas in your state has put their future in jeopardy, and we ask that exhibitors in New York be given the opportunity to operate again. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and work together on a plan to reopen New York's cinemas.

Sincerely,

Alejandro Ramirez Magaña
Chairman, Global Cinema Federation
CEO, Cinépolis

And the undersigned members of the Executive Committee:

Adam Aron, CEO
AMC Theatres

John Fithian, CEO
NATO

Mark Zoradi, CEO
Cinemark

Ajay Bijli, Chairman
PVR Cinemas

Ellis Jacob, CEO
Cineplex

Takayuki Ikeda, President
Toho Cinemas Ltd.

Mooky Greidinger, CEO
Cineworld

Laura Houlgatte, CEO
UNIC

Jane Hastings, CEO
Event Cinemas

Tim Richards, CEO
VUE International

Aurélien Bosc, CEO
Les Cinémas Pathé Gaumont

John Zeng, CEO
Wanda