



## TOWN OF ESTES PARK

March 20, 2020

Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt

On behalf of the Town of Estes Park, I am requesting the immediate closure of Rocky Mountain National Park to assist our community, our county and our state in addressing the rapidly spreading COVID-19 pandemic. The Park currently remains open without fees. The Department of Interior's current promotions are driving visitors to parks and communities like Estes Park. This increase in visitation is compounded by spring break travel and the recent closure of ski resorts elsewhere in our state.

A continued influx of visitors at this critical time presents a grave public health concern to Estes Park and our surrounding communities. Estes Park's first confirmed COVID-19 case was announced today. The Larimer County Public Health Director has formally advised us to encourage visitors to not travel through Larimer County to Estes Park. We have an older, high-risk population with many retirees, and limited critical resources. Some of our businesses are closing and others are on restrictions to comply with public health orders. Medical and emergency services, as well as basic supplies like groceries must be available to meet the needs of our community at this time. Estes Park is not in a position to support the potential needs of extra guests at this time.

Furthermore, adequate social distancing is not possible in many of the crowded areas of Rocky Mountain National Park this time of year.

For the sake of prospective visitors and our residents, including the national park staff who are our friends and neighbors, we urgently request that you consider the temporary closure of the park. If this is not an option, please reinstate fees and staff the gates. In this case, we request you modify your public messaging to exclude promotion of park visitation.

Sincerely,

Todd A. Jirsa  
Mayor

c.c: Governor Polis  
Senator Bennet  
Senator Gardner  
Representative Neguse  
Superintendent Sidles