From:	Emily Withnall
To:	Mayor Staff; Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Please take action to protect Missoula
Date:	Wednesday, October 7, 2020 3:45:14 PM

Dear Mayor Engen and Missoula City Councilors,

I am writing following Governor Bullock's Covid-19 update today to request your leadership in putting further safety precautions in place for Missoula County. Because increased safety parameters are not being provided at the state level, it is imperative that counties and cities take action individually to ensure the safety of all residents and to keep cases from spreading further. I'm also hoping the Missoula County Health Department might consider issuing a temporary closure of all non-essential businesses as well as a temporary closure of schools. Cases are far higher now than they've ever been and will continue to spike unless meaningful action is taken. I am concerned about the health and safety of our community members and about the capacity of the hospitals to handle the Covid patients they are now seeing. Although I understand that people's livelihoods are important, I believe safety is the utmost priority.

On a personal level, I want to add that I contracted Covid-19 at the end of June and am still suffering long-term and debilitating health concerns over three months later. I am not alone in this. There are others in Missoula and the state and around the country experiencing long haul Covid, which involves a range of post-viral symptoms that seem to be ongoing and with no known cure. Death is not the only possible consequence of this virus, and I would hate to see the city or county affected at all levels by a growing number of people incapacitated by Covid-19 due to longterm, and possibly chronic, illness.

In the very least, I hope that it might be possible to close bars and limit restaurants to outdoor dining and take-out only. While I don't think these two measures would go far enough to help bring numbers down, I think it would help. Putting a stop to singing and playing wind instruments in schools also seems imperative if they remain open. I became aware, recently, that students are using masks with holes where the mouth goes, to use wind instruments. This defeats the purpose of masks and could lead to even greater spreading of Covid-19.

Thank you for taking the health and safety of Missoulians into account.

Emily Withnall