

Op-Ed:

Governor Cuomo's Reluctance to Safely Reopen the Attractions Industry Hurts New York

Governor Cuomo's reopening plan has delayed the reopening of a key economic driver for New York – the attractions industry – for far too long and to the detriment of the State's citizens and businesses.

Under the Governor's plan, one of the most restrictive in the United States, places of recreation must remain closed.

Family entertainment centers, which are traditionally small facilities, such [arcades](#), indoor go-kart tracks, miniature golf, [small amusement centers](#), and more, provide quick escapes and affordable, fun family experiences in a safe controlled environment. Operators of these locations have total control over the number of guests that are admitted on any given day.

The continued closing of the attractions industry is inconsistent with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) public health recommendations for reopening and may reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the attractions industry and its ability to operate safely – now – within the scope of [CDC recommendations](#).

[Safety](#) is the attractions industry's number-one priority. It always has been, and it always will be. We appreciate Governor Cuomo's thoughtful approach to reopening New York, but now it is time to allow our industry to reopen to our guests, so they can once again enjoy safe, memorable experiences at their favorite local amusement facility.

Our industry has come together to develop new protocols and procedures for safe operation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. IAAPA, the global association for the attractions industry, has developed in-depth [COVID-19 Reopening Guidance](#) that has successfully been used in countless state reopening plans.

Attractions facilities around the country have received approval for reopening plans that include significant daily attendance caps both to ensure compliance with social distancing recommendations and to prevent the kind of uncontrolled crowds that have been experienced at other locations. The Governor need only look to attractions in New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, [Pennsylvania](#) and New Jersey – all of which have recently reopened – for evidence that these attendance caps and controls work, with reports being that distancing was generally maintained and crowd size effectively managed.

Family entertainment centers, water parks, amusement parks – the overall attractions industry - in New York has been forgotten. We employ thousands of people and contribute to our communities. Our employees are ready to work. Our guests are ready to return. And we are ready to work with the state to present our plans on how we do all of this, safely.

Governor Cuomo's reluctance to similarly move New York toward the [safe reopening](#) of the attractions industry is denying New York jobs, revenue, and – perhaps equally importantly given the stress of recent months – an escape. Governor Cuomo should reconsider his stance and engage with attractions leaders in New York before it is too late for the industry and the State.

****Ryan D'Amico is the Vice President, Owner and General Manager of Laser Bounce – Family Fun Centers in Queens and Levittown.***