



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 3, 2020

Cities in LA County Looking to Break From LA Public Health Department Over Restrictive COVID-19 Orders

Frustrated with COVID-19 restrictions from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, several localities are moving toward breaking from the public health agency and exploring alternatives in an effort to save small businesses.

Beverly Hills Council member Lili Bosse took to Twitter to announce the council is exploring the creation of a local health department. According to the [Los Angeles Times](#), council members asked city staff “to research the idea of forming a Beverly Hills public health department, which would allow the city to set its own rules for combating a pandemic.”



Image: Screenshot from lacounty.gov

The move comes as the Beverly Hills Council unanimously passed a resolution this week to oppose the county’s three-week ban on outdoor dining, the Daily Wire reports. The city’s leaders are also urging the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors repeal the directive, as it is unsupported by science and is destroying small businesses. The leaders are even exploring legal action.

“I am enraged by what the majority of county supervisors voted on without having the data to do so, especially after all of us, these many, many months, have learned that eating outdoors was the safest way during COVID,” Bosse said.

Councilman Julian A. Gold was particularly infuriated by Supervisor Shiela Kuehl’s flagrant disregard of her own mandate as she was spotted eating at an outdoor restaurant hours after voting for the ban, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The council’s stance on the ban has significant support among LA residents, the *Times* reported. Of the 922 e-mails received from the public on the issue, 919 were opposed to the county’s order.

ABC7 [reports](#) Beverly Hills is also demanding that future health orders be “based on actual data related to a particular industry, sector, or area and not be applied unilaterally to every jurisdiction in Los Angeles County.”

West Covina Mayor Tony Wu has also expressed frustration with the overarching decisions handed down by the LA Public Health Department, noting businesses have “been jerked around, back and forth” and that area students are hurting because they have not been in school for months.

Wu is also looking into establishing the city’s own agency or working alongside existing health departments in other cities. He is also exploring the creation of a regional health department that would serve surrounding cities such as Irwindale, Walnut, La Puente, Baldwin Park, etc., CBS Los Angeles reports.

ABC7 reports the city of Whittier, incensed by the department’s ban on outdoor dining, is also



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considering alternatives. “The county, with this ban has come in and done a one-size-fits-all, rather than a scalpel to take care of the situation,” said Whittier Mayor Joe Vinatieri.

CBS2 News also [reports](#) Lancaster Mayor Rex Perris has been discussing the possibility of creating a regional health department with neighboring cities Palmdale and Santa Clarita.

Critics of the LA Public Health Department contend it should not be making decisions for all 88 cities in the county and should instead make localized decisions based on area data.

“I think the premise is that the decisions that were made for the entire county may not be the best decision for each of the cities and I think that we need to have an independent voice,” [said](#) Beverly Hills Mayor Lester Friedman.

West Covina Councilman Dario Castellanos shared similar sentiments. “I think the supervisors need to come look at each region individually and see how we’re faring,” said Castellanos. “What we’re seeing here is not the same thing they may be seeing in Downtown L.A.”

But in a statement to ABC7, the LA Health Department dismissed the notion. “Cities can only establish their own health departments with state approval and demonstrated capacity to perform essential public health functions,” the statement reads. “Given the alarming surge in cases and hospitalizations across every part of the county, we would urge city managers and elected officials to support the necessary public health measures as this is our best effort to stop the surge. At this point, working together is the most sensible path forward.”

But the city of Pasadena provides a good example for other cities to follow. Pasadena established its own health department in 1892, ABC7 reports, and because of this, is the only city in Los Angeles County to still allow outdoor dining at the moment, though there are some restrictions. Parties cannot be more than six people and they must all be from the same household.

Bosse acknowledges that efforts to establish local health departments would take time and would involve the understanding that it would have to be a long-term investment. “I think it goes beyond just the health pandemic that we’re in, and I believe that’s something that will be for our children or grandchildren and generations to come. Because number one is health in all aspects of our life,” said Bosse.



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