



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 11, 2021

## Washington State Shuts Down Bar's Indoor Dining by Threatening Its Liquor License

A Washington-state bar was forced to halt indoor dining after the state threatened to suspend its liquor license for violating Governor Jay Inslee's latest shutdown order.

The Black Diamond, a family-owned Spokane Valley bar and restaurant, resumed indoor dining in mid-December in defiance of Inslee's November edict banning indoor dining, the second such diktat issued by the Democrat since March.

On December 15, the bar's owners [posted on Facebook](#):



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We were asked to close indoor dining. We complied. We did our part as Washingtonians to help. We were asked to do this for 4 weeks. Even though the science and data did not show that the spread was coming from restaurant and bars. Now that those 4 weeks have gone by and the numbers in Spokane county continue to rise it is fact and science that restaurants are not a cause. Therefore, asking for our industry and the people who depend on it for a living to go another 3 weeks (or more and Inslee has threatened) is immoral and criminal.

SO..... The Black Diamond is OPEN for Business. We are now open, Fully, from here on. We do this so that our employees, who are running out of unemployment, can make a living and survive. Our employees are suffering, just as so many others are. Some can't pay their bills. Phones have been shut off, car payments have been missed and rent has not been paid. Some will have to move back home with parents, would you want to do that Jay? Some



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can not buy Christmas presents for  
their children. They don't want charity.  
All they want is to work hard and live  
their lives.

Not surprisingly, such defiance did not sit well with Inslee and his cronies at the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board. On December 16, the board launched an investigation into the bar's actions, and 13 days later, it voted to issue an "emergency" 180-day suspension of the Black Diamond's liquor license unless it immediately knuckled under to Inslee's orders.

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If board spokeswoman Julie Graham is to be believed, the state wasn't alone in its outrage. Graham told the Spokane [Spokesman-Review](#) the board had received 73 complaints about the Black Diamond's unwillingness to let its employees become wards of the state. The bar, she added, had already "received three verbal warnings and two formal citations for COVID-19 related violations."

However, as the Black Diamond noted in its Facebook post, the establishment had been following the recommended protocols and would continue to do so: "We will be following all the guidelines we have been for the past 8 months ... the same guidelines that were deemed safe until without data Jay Inslee shut down indoor dining."

According to [KHQ](#), under the threat of losing its liquor license, "the Black Diamond decided to comply with the guidelines and close indoor dining, but say they are currently seeking legal council [sic] on the matter."

"We don't want government handouts. We don't want to get unemployment and live off of that. We don't want to get the next wave of PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] money," Black Diamond co-owner Brandon Fenton told the *Spokesman-Review*. "We would rather work for our money and have our lives free of government control."

The Black Diamond could not be reached for comment for this article.

On the other hand, Matt Shea, who retired Friday as a state representative for the district in which the Black Diamond is located, had plenty to say about the matter.

"The question itself 'is a business essential' is unconstitutional. The 'risk' right now of COVID-19 based on incontrovertible evidence doesn't even qualify as an 'emergency,'" he said in a statement to *The New American*. Besides, the Republican asserted, "The Constitution was written in an emergency for emergencies and can never be eviscerated because of emergencies."

"The persecution of the Black Diamond using 'emergency rules' bypassing procedural due process is yet another example of the out-of-control, unaccountable bureaucracy," Shea continued. "How hypocritical. They fail to prosecute or 'crack down' on the people breaking the windows of businesses but instead attack the business owners themselves with administrative law."



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