



# STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

## ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

May 12, 2021

Commissioner Howard A. Zucker, MD  
New York State Department of Health  
Corning Tower - Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Dr. Zucker,

On April 26, 2021, Governor Cuomo announced the return of the Great New York State Fair from Aug. 20 to Sept. 6, something I strongly support. The Governor declared the Fair could be held safely with modifications. With that announcement, many anticipated that Erie County would also see the return of our county fair this year. However, New York State has not yet provided guidance pertaining to requirements for other large outdoor events. As you are aware, under normal circumstances these events take months of planning. Organizing for the next year usually begins the day after the Erie County Fair ends.

With COVID-19 precautions, the task becomes incredibly more difficult.

Erie County is home to one of the largest and oldest county fairs in the nation, with this year set to mark the 181st fair. While we certainly celebrate history and tradition, it is the current economic impact of the Fair that is beneficial to so many vendors and our region.

In 2019, the Fair set a new attendance record at 1,238,456. In addition, according to the Erie County Fair, the positive economic impact averaged \$7.8 million before COVID. This is a significant economic event for Hamburg based businesses and vendors. While restrictions would most likely limit attendance and as a result affect that impact, it is very clear how important the Fair is to our region. This doesn't even address the mental and social benefits, especially for the various organizations, including 4-H, that work all year to showcase at the Fair.

As Gov. Cuomo stated when he announced the return of the NYS Fair:

"... and we are finally making it happen in a safe, responsible way with the 2021 Reimagined New York State Fair. This celebration is a unique reward for New Yorkers who have made so many sacrifices during this pandemic and will allow visitors from across the state and the country to enjoy some of the best attractions the Fair has to offer with all necessary safety guidelines in place. This is an important step towards the full return of

New York's largest events as we continue to reopen and reimagine our state's economy."

Source: [www.governor.ny.gov/news](http://www.governor.ny.gov/news), April 26, 2021

If NYS can host its Fair in Syracuse, Erie County certainly can as well here in Hamburg. Earlier this week, Epistemix, a company that uses data to simulate how diseases spread through populations, released a report that analyzed the Erie County Fairgrounds and stated it could be held safely in August. The report noted the anticipated immunity percentage come late summer.

"In all cases, by the time the Erie County Fair will be held in August, there would be enough immunity in the population, even if there were no mask wearing," said John Cordier, CEO of Epistemix.

Source: Buffalo News, [www.buffalonews.com](http://www.buffalonews.com), May 11, 2021

I strongly urge NYS to work in collaboration with Erie County Fair organizers and local leaders to ensure the return of the Erie County Fair this August. Time is of the essence, so I respectfully request that NYS do everything possible to avoid another postponement of the Erie County Fair. I am happy to work in a collaborative manner with my colleagues in government to ensure the Fair takes place in Hamburg this summer. The loss to our local economy would be devastating. We must fight for Hamburg families and businesses. There is no reason why the Fair cannot take place this summer.

If there is anything that my office can do to assist in this effort, please let me know. I am happy and willing to work with anyone at any time to let families in Hamburg and across our region attend the Erie County Fair this August.

Sincerely,



STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW  
Erie County Comptroller

CC: Ms. Jessica Underberg, Erie County Fair CEO and Manager  
Dr. Gale Burstein, Commissioner of Erie County Department of Health  
Hon. James Shaw, Town of Hamburg Supervisor