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ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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COMPTROLLER CALLS ON COUNTY AND STATE TO OPEN RESTAURANTS PERMANENTLY

Ridiculousness of implementing temporary COVID-19 rules to accommodate an 8:15 PM kickoff and 10:00 PM halftime for Bills playoff game used as rationale to open fully

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan Mychajliw is calling on the New York State Health Commissioner to revise state standards regarding restaurants to accommodate increased demands with the Buffalo Bills playoff appearance. The request: use the playoff game to fully open bars and restaurants.

“Let me be clear. Restaurant restrictions should not be in place to begin with. Small business owners are closing their doors permanently. Many will not survive the end of the week, let alone the end of the month. The Bills-Ravens playoff game can serve as an opportunity to finally implement full re-opening measures for restaurants and bars,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

The Comptroller says permitting outdoor dining only is a challenge for many struggling business owners because of Buffalo weather in January. In fact, some restaurants that invested in outdoor dining structures were told to close down anyway by the Erie County Health Department.

“Saturday night’s playoff game presents an opportunity for New York State to do the right thing. Open up, with reasonable safety measures in place. Let Buffalo Bills fans celebrate advancing to the AFC Championship game,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

Kickoff for the Buffalo Bills and Baltimore Ravens playoff game begins at 8:15 PM Saturday night, January 16th, 2021. This means that hosts of patio parties will be extremely limited to what they can do, with a 10:00 PM curfew in place. The Comptroller notes that data released by the Governor’s office shows that bars and restaurants account for less than 1.5 percent of COVID-19 cases.

“New York State is not fooling anyone by stating people are safe from COVID-19 at 9:59 PM, but certain death is imminent at 10:01 PM. How will you handle kickoff at 8:15 PM with a home Bills game? Will fans be asked to leave the stadium at 10:00 PM? Will stadium concessions be closed at halftime? What about restaurants that serve food across Erie County for the first half of the game? Will they be forced to close? Please. Open up. Do not bother with temporary measures for the Bills playoff game,” concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.

Copies of Comptroller Mychajliw's letter to the New York State Health Commissioner were shared with the Erie County Health Department, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, Buffalo Bills General Manager Brandon Beane and National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell.

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