

Hello.

This letter is written on behalf of the workers of the Linden Hills Co-op regarding our safety and wellbeing. As has been stated and restated, we are living in unprecedented times. Businesses are being made to shut down, many of which may never open again. Citizens across the country, and the world, are without jobs. People are getting sick in numbers we have not seen in decades, and while most of the young and healthy are lucky enough to be able to overcome COVID-19, many are not so fortunate.

Our customers are largely elderly, and many of our staff are at risk if infected. We are currently living on a wage that could not sustain the outstanding costs of medical care, and our healthcare system is overburdened as is. However, there are methods that have proven effective in preventing the spread of the disease, chief among them being frequent and meticulous hand-washing, and maintaining six feet of separation from others. Washing our hands is, of course, entirely up to us, but we have seen over the course of the last month that the latter is frequently out of our control.

From head counts taken by staff, and managers on duty, we have seen that the current 35 customer limit leaves both customers and employees unable to maintain adequate space from each other. In just the last week, we have faced overcrowding on a daily basis that has forced our staff to seek shelter in the back of the store, unable to attend to our work for fear of being forced into close contact with customers.

We have discussed our anxiety and fear over this issue amongst ourselves, as well as with management, and have not seen any action taken. While we are concerned with the safety of our coworkers, ourselves, our families, and our customers, the current system being practiced by management is not putting our safety first.

While many businesses are suffering; closing; potentially going bankrupt, the Co-op is seeing unprecedented profits. People will still need groceries if they are asked to wait in line for them. The Co-op will still maintain its health if we ask our customers to suffer a small inconvenience. If we fail to address this issue, however, it's the health of our employees and our community that are at risk.

For these reasons, we demand that the customer limit be lowered to 15, which has been observed to be the maximum number we can sustain while still maintaining social distance. On the day of extreme anxiety and frustration that triggered the lowering of the limit to 35, we saw a maximum of 33 customers in the store. On Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, the entire grocery staff was unable to remain on the sales floor with 27 shoppers present. On the morning of April 1<sup>st</sup>, a count taken by one of our staff found that just 23 customers were enough to drive us into the back of the store to seek refuge. As we are the ones in harm's way in the stores daily, we feel we are the most qualified members of the TCCP team to decide what constitutes a safe limit. If you disagree, we would like to know how you arrived at 35 as a safe limit.

This situation warrants swift and decisive action. We urge you to listen to the employees who have been faithfully maintaining the integrity of this establishment since long before this crisis struck. We are owners of this business too, and our voices should be heard. We cannot afford to wait until it's too late.

Sincerely,

The Linden Hills Staff