

**From:** James Schwantes <[sweetersongfarm@gmail.com](mailto:sweetersongfarm@gmail.com)>

**Date:** September 8, 2021 at 3:35:18 PM EDT

**To:** Patricia Soutas-Little <[psoutaslittle@leelanau.gov](mailto:psoutaslittle@leelanau.gov)>

**Subject: Re: Masking**

Dear Patricia,

I want to make an official public comment on tomorrow's agenda about the COVID-19 masking mandate from the health department. With the nation in the middle of yet another surge due to people not being vaccinated, with the Munson Hospital system swamped with COVID cases, with 18 months of data demonstrating the effectiveness of masking and the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines, with young children in schools unvaccinated and vulnerable, with dozens of school districts without masking requirements across the country experiencing student and teacher deaths and shutdowns due to COVID, it makes absolutely no sense to even be having the discussion that is scheduled for tomorrow.

This is not a "freedom" issue. No one is free to endanger the physical health of others. Acting contrary to the recommendations of our public health professionals disregards the health and safety of first responders and medical staff who have to treat COVID patients, our neighbors with compromised immune situations, and children who can't yet get vaccinated. Not following these recommendations also creates an environment for further continuing mutation of the virus and endangering the community as a whole. If the commissioners who oppose masks don't want to use them, they are free to stay home. The county commission, however, has no business putting the entire community at risk by turning their personal choices into political actions that endanger us all.

Please put this in the public comment record.

Thank You.

Jim Schwantes

Cedar