**Important points when writing letters or speaking to elected officials**

Purpose:

Advocate for the safe return of competitive swim teams to their training facilities

**1. Safety-Swimming is safe!**

According to the CDC there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted through chlorinated water.  When coaches enforce strict safety protocols in and around the pool swimming is one of the safest sports

Unlike many other sports, competitive swimming does not require direct contact between teammates or coaches and proper social distancing can be maintained throughout practice.

Individual Swimming is determined to be a low-risk sport by Governor Cuomo and NYSPHSAA

New Jersey Swim Safety Alliance compiled data regarding indoor pools and COVID spread.  Over 60 swim clubs responded with more than 320, 000 people through their swim facilities and zero cases of COVID

Coaches enforce strict safety protocols during practices that mitigate transmission. Capacity is reduced, masks are worn, social distance is always maintained, locker rooms are not used.

Pools are especially inhospitable for the transmission of all respiratory diseases including COVID-19 reasons for this include the warm and humid pool environment, facility air circulation, inactivation of viruses by chlorinated water

Section VI girls swimming completed a successful and safe season.  Each team ran an indoor program with strict COVID safety plans that were enforced by coaches.  Season was safe, no teams had to pause due to COVID spread, no cases of COVID brought in from the community, no team transmission.

When swimmers have practice it takes place in a safe and controlled environment that coaches control.  Swimming provides socialization in a safe controlled environment.  When these kids do not have swim practice, they will find a way to socialize in environments that are not safe or controlled which is more likely to spread COVID-19

(For written letters from each team should provide their own COVID safety document including COVID incident plan.  Be able to verbally describe details of your team and facility safety plan).

**2. No access to pools**

Currently there is no access to high school pools by any swim clubs in WNY due to schools denying facility use to any “outside groups”

WNY Swim clubs have been built on the use of high school pools for training.  Pools are expensive to build and maintain.  The low cost of using high school pools is what allows swim clubs to exist and thrive

Our sport relies on these relationships with school pools.  Without access to school pools swim clubs will collapse and the sport of swimming will die in this area.  This sport has no future without access to school pools.

Swim Clubs should be viewed differently than other groups that are requesting facility use.  Swim clubs have safety data to offer, have proven safety protocols to mitigate risk, can operate in their own “bubble” with little or no interaction with district students. These clubs have been operating out of these schools for decades and strong relationships exist

**3. Mental Health of children/young athletes**

Physical activity has a known positive impact on mental health.  The restrictions on youth sports has resulted in decreased physical activity and a worrisome increase in depression and anxiety in young athletes

Being a part of a swim program where children can safely interact with friends has a positive mental health impact.